Art of Nepal

Pratapaditya Pal



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A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection

by Pratapaditya Pal

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
in association with
University of California Press
Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London

Copublished by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90036
and
University of California Press
Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London

Edited by Kathleen Preciado
Designed in Los Angeles by Renée Cossutta and Judith Lausten
Photography by Lawrence S. Reynolds, head photographer, and Peter Brenner and Jeffrey Conley, photographers, Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Typeset in Garamond typefaces by Continental Typographics, Inc.
Printed in an edition of 5,000 softcover and 1,000 hardcover by Nissha Printing Co., Ltd., Japan

This project is supported in part by grants from the Asian Publications Fund and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
Art of Nepal.
Bibliography: p.
Includes index.
1. Art, Nepali–Catalogs. 2. Art–California–Los Angeles–Catalogs. 3. Los Angeles County Museum of Art–Catalogs. I. Pal, Pratapaditya. II. Title.
N7310.8.N4L6 1985 709'.549'6074019494
84-20168
ISBN 0-87587-122-4 (pbk.)
ISBN 0-520-05406-7 (University of Calif.)
ISBN 0-520-05407-5 (University of Calif. : pbk.)

In the transliteration of Newari and Sanskrit names and terms, diacritical marks have been omitted, except in the Appendix, Glossary, Bibliography, and Index; they have also been retained in selected words used only once.

Dimensions are in inches (in) and centimeters (cm), height preceding width.

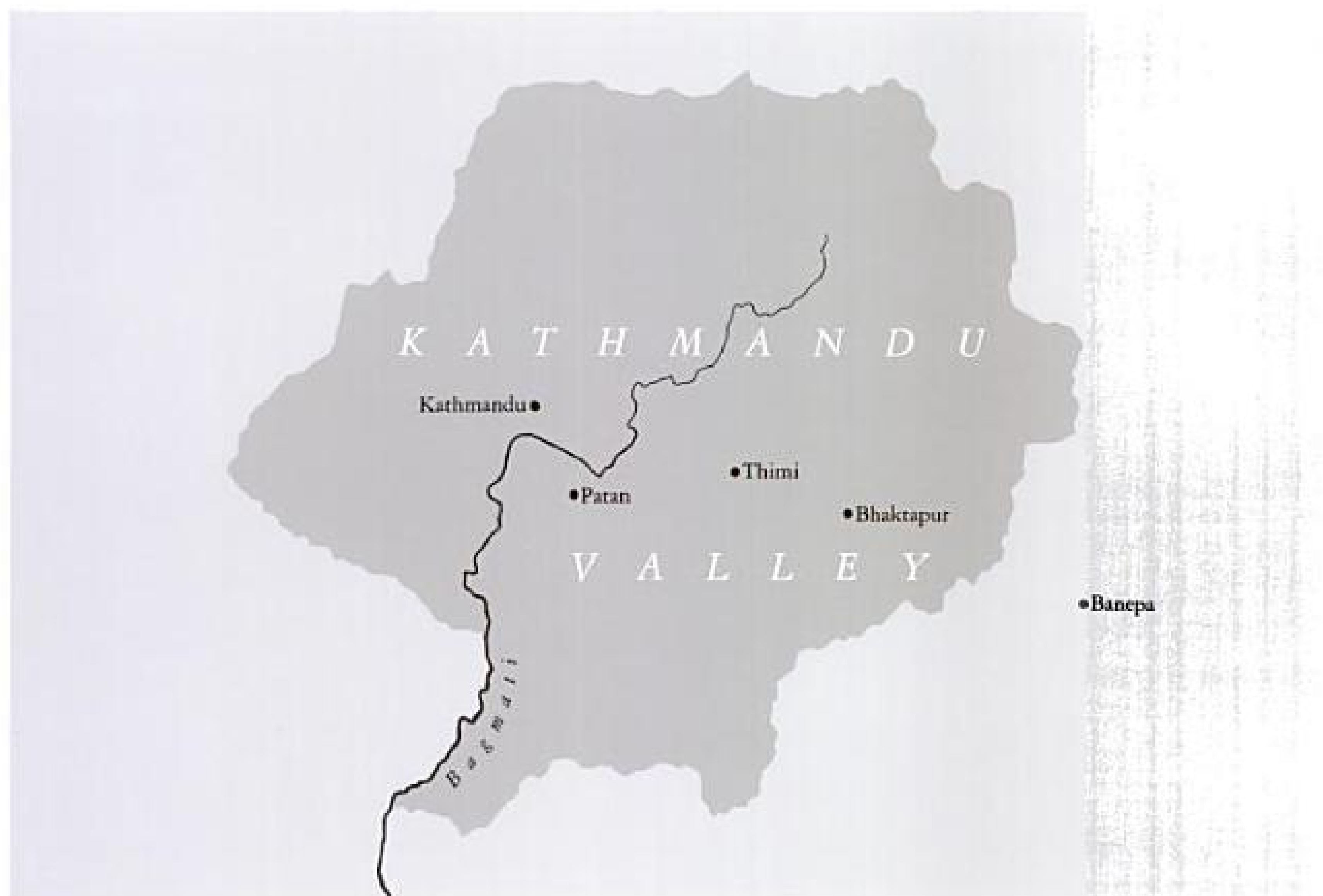
For most sculptures, height is the only dimension provided. All paintings were rendered in opaque watercolor, unless otherwise indicated.

Cover: *The Goddess Vasudhara*, S24

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Foreword

For the last two decades interest in the art of Nepal has been increasing in this country. There exists today among scholars and general audiences accordingly a growing need for a deeper exposition and more thorough understanding of the elements that typify this important artistic tradition.

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art is particularly well suited to respond to these needs as it has the two ingredients most critical to accomplishing this task: a preeminent collection of Nepalese art and, within its curatorial ranks, a renowned authority, Pratapaditya Pal, senior curator of Indian and Southeast Asian art. A distinguished scholar and author, Dr. Pal has a reputation as one of the world's leading authorities on Nepalese art. Since his student days, he has made the art of Nepal his particular field of concentrated study. His writings on the subject are the standard texts for teachers, students, and experts of both art and religion.

Art of Nepal constitutes the second volume in a series of detailed catalogues raisonnés focusing on the museum's Indian and Southeast Asian collections, the finest in the United States. The volume is fundamental to the study of Nepalese art and culture and is of overwhelming significance for future scholarship not only of that tradition but of the wider field of Indian and Southeast Asian art as well.

Earl A. Powell III
Director
Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Preface and Acknowledgments

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has embarked on a long-range program to systematically publish a series of volumes documenting its extensive holdings in the arts of India, Tibet, Nepal, and Southeast Asia. *Art of Nepal* is the second volume in the series, which began with publication of the catalogue *Art of Tibet* in 1983.

The museum's collection of art from Nepal is one of the most comprehensive of its kind outside the small Himalayan kingdom. The core of the Nepali collection was acquired from Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck beginning in 1969. Since then, the collection has been substantially augmented with purchases and gifts from many generous donors, to whom I am most grateful.

The collection consists primarily of sculptures, paintings, and drawings. The works from the sculpture collection—executed in stone, bronze, wood, terra-cotta, and ivory—represent almost the entire historical period, from A.D. 300 to the nineteenth century. The painting collection is probably the most comprehensive of its kind in the world and includes outstanding examples of illustrated manuscripts, religious paintings on cloth, and didactic and narrative paintings on paper, dating from the eleventh through the nineteenth centuries.

The most fascinating and significant holding is a group of sketchbooks and drawings given to the museum over the last few years by Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles of New York. The most extensive assemblage of such material in the world, the collection consists of sketchbooks that either were kept in artists' families to be used as model-books or served as iconographic manuals for priests. Dating from the fifteenth century, the group is published here for the first time, although in a restricted presentation. It is hoped that it will be the subject of a future monograph.

Many paintings and several sculptures and sketchbooks bear inscriptions that provide useful information about the objects, particularly the dates of dedication. These are not only of great help in attributing other, undated works, but they are also of much significance in the history of Nepali art. Most such inscriptions are discussed in the Appendix and have been read and translated with the assistance of several scholars, including Ian Alsop, Hemraj Shakya, Dhanavajra Vajracharya, and Gautamvajra Vachracharya, to all of whom I remain grateful.

A catalogue such as this cannot be produced without the cooperation of many people in the museum, and I would like to thank them all wholeheartedly. A few individuals, however, must be named because of their direct contribution: Head

Photographer Lawrence S. Reynolds and the staff of the Department of Photographic Services for the excellent photography; Librarian Eleanor Hartman and her staff for their help in obtaining books and conducting research; departmental secretary Betty Ulius for typing several drafts of the manuscript with patience and care; and Kathleen Preciado for her judicious editing. The staff of the Conservation Center cleaned and mounted many works of art here catalogued, while my colleague Robert Brown, as well as many diligent volunteers to the department, have been of much general assistance. I am indebted to them all. It is also a pleasure to express my appreciation to Director Earl A. Powell III, Assistant Director for Museum Programs Myrna Smoot, and Executive Editor John R. Miles of the University of California Press for their support and encouragement.

Pratapaditya Pal
Senior Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art and
Curator-in-charge of West Asian Art

General Introduction



This is no unfitting place in which to remark that within the confines of the Valley . . . there is concentrated a world of varied interest, tradition, and beauty as may be found nowhere even among the history-coloured and majestic towns and ruins of India. . . . The continuity of life and faith has suffered from no religious intolerance for, strange though it may seem, Buddhism and Hinduism have here met and kissed each other. . . . In some ways—certainly in more ways than any other state or district in India itself can claim—Kathmandu remains to-day much as it was in the seventh century.

Perceval Landon, 1928[1]

Prologue

In many ways the observations made by British diplomat and author Perceval Landon in 1928 are equally true of today's Kathmandu Valley, even though profound changes have taken place since Nepal opened its frontiers in the 1950s. Despite modernization, Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries still stand adjacent to one another as they did when Chinese ambassador Wang Hsuan-tse visited the country in the seventh century; festivals continue to be performed in the traditional manner; and generally, rites and rituals, both social and religious, are observed faithfully, even if their significance is not always properly understood. Although change is inevitable, tradition still binds the life of the average inhabitant as inexorably as it did in Hsuan-tse's or Landon's times.

The objects discussed in this catalogue were created primarily in what is today known as the Kathmandu Valley.[2] Surrounded by mountains and watered principally by the river Bagmati, this picturesque valley is situated almost in the middle of Nepal. The country itself consists of little more than fifty thousand square miles and stretches like a rectangle in the lap of the Himalayas. Nepal is bordered by Tibet to the north and India to the south. To preserve its sovereignty, Nepal has had to maintain a delicate balance in its relations with these two neighbors. Undoubtedly, the great mountains dominating the Nepali landscape have formed a natural barrier, preventing even the most ambitious monarchs of India and Tibet from conquering and annexing the country. The mountains, however, do not obstruct the constant flow of commerce and culture between Nepal and her neighbors.

The name Nepal traditionally denoted only the Kathmandu Valley, which covers approximately two hundred square miles. The three principal cities of the valley are Bhaktapur (Bhadgaon), Kathmandu, and Patan. Although established at different times, these three cities have each contributed much to the cultural richness of the country, and most works of art included in this catalogue were created in one of the three cities. Artists, and objects, moved about easily from one city to another, as each is within easy reach of the others—the entire valley can be crossed on foot in less than a day. A particular style of art cannot, therefore, be identified with a particular city.

The Kathmandu Valley was for many centuries a unified political entity and formed a single kingdom. In 1482 the valley was divided into three kingdoms: Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Banepa (located east of the immediate confines of the valley). In due course, Banepa merged with Bhaktapur, and Patan—which was nominally a part of Kathmandu until about 1600—thereafter became a separate kingdom. Until the

reunification effected by the conquering Shah dynasty from Gorkha in 1769, the valley nurtured three independent city-states: Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Patan. Whatever the political vicissitudes, the Kathmandu Valley has remained throughout the last two millennia a homogeneous cultural region, especially in terms of the visual arts.

The people responsible for creating most examples of art and architecture in Nepal are known as the Newars. Members of the Mongoloid race, the Newars speak a language related to the Tibetan-Burman linguistic family, which—in addition to their contributions to the development of Tibetan art—may explain their natural affinity with the Tibetans.[3] Although the Newars have been heavily influenced by Indian traditions, they have maintained their own ethnic and cultural identity and remain one of the most fascinating of all the ethnic groups that make up the mosaic of Nepal's diverse population. Among the earliest settlers of the Kathmandu Valley, the Newars have developed much of the valley's agriculture and trade, especially with Tibet, and, when necessary, have taken up arms for their rulers. The large number of model-books in the museum's collection, with their notations in the Newari language, provide ample evidence of the Newars' creative energies. Moreover, the beautiful and complex palaces and temples in the Kathmandu Valley reflect the genius and spirituality of the people.

Nepal is one of the very few countries in the world where both Buddhism and Hinduism have coexisted continuously for almost two thousand years. Buddhism is practiced largely by the Newars of the valley and various races of Mongoloid stock living deep in the mountains, especially along the country's border with Tibet. Hinduism, however, is the state religion and is followed by a greater number of people. At the popular and practical levels, the two religions are far less distinguishable than they are in theory. The rituals, shrines, and deities of both religions receive universal veneration, irrespective of individual belief. The peaceful coexistence from early times of the two religions is evident not only from epigraphical sources but also from observations made by Chinese visitors in the seventh century.[4] Kings were equally generous to Hindu and Buddhist establishments, and the Chinese observed how Hindu and Buddhist temples stood "touching one another" in the valley. This religious harmony continued until the coming of the Shah dynasty in the eighteenth century. Thereafter, state patronage of Buddhism suffered a marked decline. Perhaps the process began much earlier and was set in motion soon after the disintegration of Buddhism in India in the thirteenth century. As in other areas of culture, in matters of religion also, Nepal has always drawn sustenance from Indian civilization.

Historical Background

The study of Nepal's prehistory is still in its infancy, and it is not known when and by whom the valley was first settled. By the time of the Buddha (563–483 B.C.), however, Nepal was already conducting trade with northern India. The recorded political history of Nepal begins somewhere around A.D. 300 when a dynasty known as the Lichchhavi assumed power. Present evidence indicates that the history of Nepali sculpture begins only a century or so earlier.

The Lichchhavis of Nepal belonged to the same tribe as the Lichchhavis of Vaisali in northern Bihar in India. The Indian Lichchhavis were well known during the time of the Buddha but seem to have lost political power during the early centuries of the Christian era. What prompted one or more of the Indian Lichchhavis to seek their fortunes in Nepal around the beginning of the fourth century is not known. In traditional histories of Nepal, the Lichchhavis are recorded as having usurped power from the Kirata dynasty.

From A.D. 300 the history of Nepal is conveniently divided into five broad periods: Lichchhavi (330–879/80), Transitional (879/80–1200), Early Malla (1200–1482), Late Malla (1482–1769), and Shah (since 1769). In considering these historical divisions, it must be borne in mind that dynastic change may have had little or no effect on artistic tradition or style.

By the time the Lichchhavis arrived in the valley, both Buddhism and Hinduism, the two major Indian religions, were already flourishing. Curiously, the third Indian religious system, Jainism, appears not to have been introduced into Nepal, even though there is evidence that Jainism was a familiar religion in Vaisali, the original homeland of the Lichchhavis. Siva and Vishnu (principal gods of the Hindu pantheon), cults of various nature spirits and tutelary divinities (yakshas), and Mother Goddesses were already familiar figures in Nepali life and art. Although Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, is today within the kingdom of Nepal, Buddhism probably was introduced into the valley during the reign of the Indian emperor Asoka (third century B.C.). It received stronger support from the Lichchhavis, whose forebears in Vaisali were ardent admirers of the Buddha even during his lifetime.

The language spoken in the valley during the reign of the Kiratas is not known. During Lichchhavi rule Sanskrit, the principal language of northern India, became the court language. All Lichchhavi inscriptions are composed in Sanskrit and written in Brahmi, the script widely used in northern India. The earliest dated document of Lichchhavi rule is an inscription carved on a pillar in the year A.D. 386. This and other dates in early Lichchhavi inscriptions generally refer to the Saka era, which began in India in A.D. 78. The literary styles and very mode of issuing the inscriptions—in addition to the language, script, and dating of such inscriptions—clearly demonstrate the overpowering

influence of Sanskrit on Nepali culture during Lichchhavi rule. As with literature, mythology, and religion, so also in the visual arts, northern India was the principal creative source for the unknown artists of Nepal.

The Lichchhavi period of Nepali history is said to have lasted from about A.D. 300 until 879/80, when the Nepali (or Newari) Samvat was introduced. [The abbreviation N.S. before a year refers to the Nepali era or *samvat*.] Why a new era was started is not known, nor is it clear whether it marked the inauguration of a new dynasty. The termination of the Lichchhavi period in 879/80 is only a convenient landmark for the modern historian, and the Lichchhavis may well have continued to rule thereafter. Previously, the period between 879/80 and 1200 was designated by the word Thakuri, but as there is no evidence of a Thakuri dynasty ever having ruled Nepal, it is more appropriate to name the period Transitional.[5]

While the political history of the Transitional period remains cloudy and the relation between the monarchs of this period and the earlier Lichchhavi dynasty is unclear, certainly there was no cultural break with the past. Curiously, however, the period is remarkably barren for royal edicts and inscriptions, and names of most rulers of the age have been recovered mostly from palm-leaf manuscripts of religious texts. This was indeed a prolific period for copying Hindu and Buddhist religious books, most of which were composed earlier in India. Some of these contain the earliest surviving examples of Nepali painting. In the museum's collection are several fine examples of illuminated manuscripts from the Transitional period.

Although politically the Transitional period may have been unstable, culturally, it appears to have been as rich as the Lichchhavi period. Traditional chronicles, manuscript colophons, and the images themselves attest to the fact that, if anything, the Transitional period witnessed even a stronger surge of spiritual benefaction than the previous period. Not only do the large number of surviving books evince a strong bibliographic interest among the valley's educated and cultured, but the innumerable shrines, temples, and water fountains with their wealth of sculptural decoration, as well as the vast quantity of surviving bronzes, clearly reflect the economic prosperity and generous artistic patronage of the time. Although the period is not as prolific in stone sculpture as the Lichchhavi period, certainly the finest surviving bronzes were created during the Transitional period.

While both Vishnu and Siva continued to thrive during the Transitional period, it was also at this time that the temple of Pasupatinath, the oldest Saiva shrine in the valley, became the most celebrated. From the point of view of religious history, the most significant development of the period was the proliferation of the cult of the Great Goddess as Sakti, the personification of cosmic energy. Although goddesses had been venerated both in India and Nepal from much earlier times, the idea of conceiving a cosmic goddess as the supreme being began to gain currency in India from about the fifth century. In Nepal it appears that the Sakta religious system (followers of Sakti are known as Sakta) may have been introduced in the earlier period but gained wide popularity during the Transitional period. The Sakta religion is also characterized as tantric, derived from the word tantra, the common designation of a particular class of religious texts in which the female aspect of divinity is as dominant as the male.

If no other evidence were available, judging simply by the vast quantity of surviving Buddhist manuscripts, it must be concluded that during the Transitional period Buddhism reached its zenith in Nepal. The period roughly coincides with the hegemony of the Pala dynasty (c. 750–1160) in neighboring Bihar and Bengal, two Indian

regions with which Nepal has always had close cultural ties. Supported by the generous patronage of the Pala monarchs, Buddhism was especially strong in Bihar and Bengal where a number of monasteries attained international status. Nepali Buddhist monks and scholars maintained close ties with these Indian monasteries, while Indian monks and mystics frequently visited the valley. The form of Buddhism flourishing in the Indian monasteries during this period is known as Vajrayana (thunderbolt path). Heavily influenced by tantric themes, Vajrayana Buddhism consists of elaborate rituals, both esoteric and exoteric, involving a multitude of divine figures including a large number of goddesses. It was during the Transitional period that Vajrayana Buddhism firmly entrenched itself in the Kathmandu Valley. During the eleventh century, Nepal also became an important spiritual source for Tibetans, and Nepali monks and artists played a key role in the revival of Buddhism in that country.

The names of Lichchhavi monarchs include the suffix deva (god), which continued to be appended by rulers until 1200. Suddenly, in that year, deva was replaced in the names of royalty by the word *malla* (warrior). Thereafter, until the advent of the Shahs from western Nepal in 1769, most kings bore names that included *malla*, although the term deva continued to be used occasionally. Whether the *malla* name-ending signals a dynasty different from that of the earlier devas or whether it was simply an affectation is not known. The period between 1200 and 1482 is considered to be the Early Malla period, while the timespan from 1482 until 1769 is regarded as the Late Malla period. The Shah dynasty, which began its rule in 1769, continues to occupy the Nepali throne today.

The history of the Early Malla period is dominated by the personalities of two remarkable kings, Sthitimalla (r. 1382–95) and his grandson Yakshamala (r. 1428–82). Sthitimalla, from Mithila in northern Bihar, reunited the valley into a single kingdom after several centuries of political instability. During his long reign spanning more than half of the fifteenth century, Yakshamala extended and consolidated the kingdom still further. Although Kathmandu and Patan continued to enjoy both political and cultural importance, Bhaktapur now assumed preeminence. It became the capital city from the mid-twelfth century and remained the seat of power for the early Mallas. The other city that came into prominence during this period was Banepa.

Whether the early Lichchhavis maintained close contacts with their homeland (Vaisali in Bihar) is not known, but certainly from the thirteenth century through the Malla period Mithila remained culturally important for the valley. Religious and literary ideas brought by brahmins from Mithila permeated the Bhaktapur court, and Sthitimalla even adopted certain administrative methods from Mithila. The area was a bastion of Hindu religion and philosophy, particularly of the Vaishnava faith, centering around the cult of Krishna. Although images of Krishna from earlier periods can be found in the valley, the rapid growth of the Krishna cult in the region must be attributed to the new relationship with Mithila.

In view of this close association with Mithila, one would have expected the language to have dominated the court culture of the valley. This was not the case, and although Sanskrit retained its importance, it was now rivaled by Newari, which came to be used increasingly as the language of administration and remained so until it was replaced by the Nepali language during the Shah dynasty. Original compositions of surviving manuscripts related to diverse aspects of the life of the country—whether drama, religion, grammar, or medicine—are written in Newari. It is not surprising, therefore, that a strong sense of national identity began to be forged among the people of the valley from the time of the early Mallas.

The most significant political feature of the Late Malla period was the ultimate creation of three city-states: Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Patan. Although the rulers were all Mallas and interrelated, they constantly quarreled with one another, which facilitated the takeover by the Shah dynasty in 1769. Despite the rivalries and internecine

warfare among the three city-states, however, commerce and art continued to flourish. Indeed, the much admired temples and palaces, with their rich wood carvings, dominating the older sections of the three cities are creations of the Late Malla period. The religious zeal of the nobility and merchant class remained undiminished, and the artists of the valley continued to flourish. Although the Mallas themselves were ardent Hindus, they appear to have followed their predecessors' policy of religious toleration. Nevertheless, for various reasons, Buddhism declined, and few Buddhist institutions benefited from royal patronage. Although Buddhist monasteries and temples began to decay, individual Buddhists—both Nepali and Tibetan—continued to commission bronzes and paintings, as is evident by the museum's large collection. Malla-period Buddhists were in general less interested in commissioning books than were their forebears.

Malla rule in Nepal coincided with the predominance of Muslim kings and the spread of Islam and Islamic culture in much of northern India. It is somewhat curious that, but for one brief though fairly devastating raid in the thirteenth century, no Muslim ruler attempted to conquer Nepal. In general, Islam made no headway in Nepal, but Nepali courts did fall under the influence of Muslim culture, particularly of the imperial Mughal court of Agra and Delhi. During the early seventeenth century some Nepali artists influenced by Mughal art developed a distinct style of painting that absorbed many features from the Mughal style.

Although the Shah period is characterized by greater political stability, it has not significantly contributed to the development of the traditional arts in the valley. Hindu temples continue to be built and artists have remained occupied making images for both Hindus and Buddhists, but most works produced during the last two centuries demonstrate neither the creative flair nor the technical finesse of the Malla period.

The Patron and the Artist

Very little information is available about either the patron or the artist in Nepal. Generally, patronage was extended to the artist by kings and members of the royal families, nobles and merchants, and priests of both religions. Many patrons of Buddhist art were Tibetan monks. The principal motive of a patron was to acquire spiritual merit by commissioning an icon and presenting it to a temple, monastery, or individual priest. The broad choice of subject depended on the personal faith of the donor. Thus, a Saiva would dedicate a Siva image, but the reasons motivating him to commission one particular type of image as opposed to another are unknown. In some instances, the choice of a theme is obvious, as for example when a particular form of the god Vishnu was preferred to commemorate the performance of a particular Vaishnava rite. Or again, a Buddhist who wanted to increase the prosperity and welfare of his family probably worshiped Vasudhara, goddess of wealth. Fortunately, a number of objects in the collection contain dedicatory inscriptions providing enough information to identify to a degree the persons directly involved in the artistic process as well as the purpose for which the objects were made.

Only one object in the collection can be associated directly with royalty: a painting of a Vishnu shrine (P26) dedicated by Jitamitramalla (r. 1673–96) and his brother Ugramalla of Bhaktapur. A portrait of a Shah king (P39) may also have been a royal commission, but this attribution is unconfirmed. Although several objects in the collection bear inscriptions containing names of donors, very little is known about them. Bhuvana Jiva, the tenth-century donor of a gilt-bronze plaque of Vishnu (S13) belonged to "the most excellent Vaidya family." The term *vaidya* generally means "physician" and also denotes a caste. During the Lichchhavi period, parts of southern Kathmandu (Laghan-Tole) were known as Vaidyagrama or the village of the Vaidyas.[6] Likewise, all we know about Tejarama and his brother Jayatarama, donors of the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11), is their caste affiliation. Their surname, Somasarman, and description as "twice-born" indicate that they were brahmins (Hindus of the highest caste).

Buddhist donors of works in the collection include merchants, *vajracharyas* (priests), and members of the Bharo family. The *Paramartha Namasangiti* manuscript (P5) was donated by Kirtipala, who styles himself simply as a merchant (*sarthavaha*). The merchant responsible for donating a Vasudhara mandala (P17) is described as a metalsmith or -trader (*tamrakara*). More commonly donors were *vajracharyas*. Although originally Buddhist monks were expected to be celibate, in Nepal the *vajracharyas* are allowed to marry and raise families. Thus, they became the Buddhist counterparts of the Hindu brahmin priests.

If we know very little about the donors of the objects, we are equally ill informed about the artists. Most works of art are unsigned. Nepalis believe that God is the ultimate creator of all art and the artist is simply a mortal instrument. Furthermore, the making of a religious object is considered an act of devotion and a means to obliterate the ego; hence, the artist generally remains anonymous.

Inscriptions on sculptures do not contain names of artists, but a few paintings do. The dedicatory inscription in the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11) states that the painting was rendered by Jayateja Puna in ten days. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the scribe responsible for the inscription should proudly record the time taken to paint the mandala. To my knowledge, no other dedicatory inscription contains even this much information about the artist. Two other artists, Indraraja and Jogideva, are named in a seventeenth-century model-book (D10) and are characterized as *chitrakara*, the common Sanskrit expression to denote an artist. Their exact relationship is not given, but probably they belonged to the same family.

Both the words *puna* and *chitrakara* are used to denote professional artists. Generally, artists rank near the bottom of the social hierarchy, and the profession was very likely hereditary. There is no evidence for any schools or academies of artists, but people outside the artists' subcaste could probably join the profession as apprentices, although members of the higher castes were unlikely to do so. Some artists or families may have worked exclusively for a court or rich patron, as in Mughal India, but this is only surmised. Families of traditional artists and craftsmen still exist in the valley, but unfortunately no sociological study of either the subcaste or the profession has yet been made. Usually, the artisan or craftsman's home was his workshop, and specific sections of the town were designated for individual professions. Moreover, different towns also specialized in particular occupations, Patan being the center for metallurgy. Interestingly, most bronzesmiths in this town live in the southeastern sector, the residential quarters of the monasteries. They are known as Sakya-bhikshus because they claim descent from Buddha Sakyamuni. They are not bhikshus or monks, however, but represent a specific group among the Newari Buddhist laity. Another Newari caste group is the Uray, makers of religious objects who were largely domiciled in Tibet. An influential group, the Urays also conducted much trade with Tibet and often returned home with bronzes and paintings.

At least one document in the collection suggests that some *vajracharyas* were also artists. This is an artist's model-book prepared by the *vajracharya* Srimantadeva in Lhasa in 1652/53 (D9). Srimantadeva may himself have been responsible for the drawings. In India and other Buddhist countries, Buddhist monks were known to have been artists. Certainly many Tibetan monks were accomplished sculptors and painters.[7] Whether Srimantadeva was an artist or not, this sketchbook and others in the collection (D12, D20) clearly indicate that Newari artists were not only involved with monasteries in Tibet but also produced works of art for Tibetan patrons living in the Kathmandu Valley.

What is perhaps the most significant aspect of the fascinating group of model-books in the collection—the largest assemblage of such material—is that in these folios is revealed the development of the artist's technique. These model-books obviously belonged to families of professional artists and were passed down from generation to generation. Moreover, the personal religious predilection of the artist did not affect his vocation, for several books contain sketches of both Hindu and Buddhist deities. Indeed, the model-books convincingly demonstrate that the Nepali artists worked very much in the same manner as artists in other societies and cultures, whether in India or pre-Renaissance Europe.

The Realm of the Immortals

Most objects in the collection served a religious function. Generally, sculptures depict the various divinities of the Hindu and Buddhist pantheons. A greater thematic variety is apparent in the paintings and graphic works that, in addition to images, contain mandalas (graphic symbols of the universe, usually in the form of circle enclosing a square), mythological stories, astrological and architectural subjects, and portraits, although these, too, generally occur in a religious context. Very few objects are concerned with secular themes or serve a purely secular function.

Hinduism and Buddhism continue to coexist in Nepal as they once did in India and the countries of Southeast Asia and still do in Sri Lanka. For various reasons the two faiths have interacted in the valley in many ways that are peculiarly local. The relatively small size and population of the valley, as well as its geographical isolation, certainly are partly responsible for the harmonious commingling of the two faiths. Although Newari society is religiously divided, with Buddhists predominating, ethnic and social solidarity have also contributed to religious harmony. Further, Hinduism and Buddhism share many similar rites and rituals that bridge the gulf. At the popular level, moreover, gods and goddesses are worshiped primarily for material benefits (such as good health and welfare) for the individual and family, and it makes little or no difference whether one receives blessings from a Hindu or Buddhist deity as long as that deity is considered to be potent. Thus, every Nepali who passes by the wayside shrine of Mahakala or Bhairava outside the old palace in Kathmandu venerates the image, while both Hindu and Buddhist women flock to the ancient shrine of the Buddhist goddess Hariti (called Sitala by the Hindus) to make certain that their children will not be afflicted by smallpox or other diseases. Images of both faiths were made by professional artists whose personal beliefs did not influence their vocation. Thus, although the art is primarily religious, a Hindu or Buddhist style is not discernible in the context of Nepali art.

Hinduism and Buddhism with their complex rituals and vast pantheons were introduced into the valley from India. The pantheons were further swelled by the incorporation of local gods and spirits who are just as important in the daily life of the population as are the major and more universally known deities. In the Introduction will be discussed the major figures of both religions, some iconographic principles underlying the representation of these deities, and certain ritualistic and conceptual features peculiar to Nepali culture.

Whether Hindu or Buddhist, the artistic representations of the deities share certain common features. The gods are depicted either as yogis with matted hair and wearing few garments or as regal figures, diademed and richly adorned. Ornaments include various necklaces, armlets, bracelets, and earrings. A way of beautifying the individual,

common to Hindu and Buddhist images whether male or female, is to paint the palms of the hands red, a custom continued today by women in Nepal and India. The yogic aspect is usually represented by a particular hairstyle, animal skin (usually of a black buck), and ornaments in the form of a snake. Even when portrayed as a yogi, the god may be adorned with jewelry. The goddesses, too, are generally represented with profuse ornaments, even in their awesome manifestations. The god usually wears a dhoti and the goddess, a sari—both of which consist of unstitched cloth.

Many important divinities of the Indo-Nepali pantheons have both benign and angry forms. The awesome manifestations, conceived for two principal purposes, do not represent the demonic nature of the deities. At one level they were meant to ward off evil forces and spirits, and on a more philosophical level they symbolize the cosmic nature of the deities. They are the visible symbols of the principle of *mysterium tremendum*. Another method used in the Indian tradition to express the cosmic nature of the gods is to equip divine representations with multiple limbs and body parts. Most commonly, four arms symbolize the four directions. Multiples of six, eight, ten, twelve, and even one thousand —all representing infinity—are also frequently encountered. Likewise, some forms have multiple heads and legs, multilimbed deities being more popular in Buddhist iconography.

All deities hold in their hands some kind of identifying attribute that also symbolizes their function and power. The same attributes may be held by different deities, both Hindu and Buddhist, and may have different meanings in different contexts. The lotus flower, for instance, is a ubiquitous attribute held by the Hindu Vishnu and Lakshmi as well as by the Buddhist Avalokitesvara and Tara. The flower also serves as a base or seat for most deities of both pantheons. Its extensive use in religious art reflects various symbolic meanings. As a divine seat it is a cosmogonic symbol associated with the primordial being and the very creation of the universe. As an attribute it also symbolizes beauty, vegetative abundance, wisdom, and even the final emancipation or nirvana, the goal of all Buddhists. Or again, many deities carry a book symbolizing knowledge or wisdom. Others hold various weapons symbolizing their evil-destroying powers.

Another feature characteristic of both Hindu and Buddhist divinities is their association with animals. Animals frequently serve as mounts for Hindu gods and less often for Buddhist deities. Animal heads are sometimes substituted for human heads on Hindu and Buddhist divinities. Human and demonic figures may also serve as mounts, and, in some images, a Buddhist deity may trample Hindu figures (P13). The association of an animal with a particular deity not only serves as an iconographic cognizant but probably also relates to the survival of more ancient animalistic beliefs. For instance, Siva's mount, the bull, may well have been the focus of an independent cult before the animal's association with that deity.

Hindu Deities

The major Hindu deities represented in the collection are Siva, Vishnu, the Great Goddess, Ganesa (god of auspiciousness), and Karttikeya or Kumara (the divine general) and their various manifestations. Brahma (the creator), Siva (the destroyer), and Vishnu (the preserver) form the trinity of Hinduism. The two principal religious systems of the Hindus revolve around Siva and Vishnu. Both Ganesa and Karttikeya belong to the family of Siva. Known in Nepal as Sakti or more popularly as Bhagavati, the Great Goddess is the focus of an important religious system in Hinduism and is particularly popular in Nepal, either as Durga or one of the Ashtamatrika (eight mothers). At the same time, in multiple guises, she is also associated with the principal male deities as their spouses. Thus, theoretically, each major god has a female partner, and the two that are the most familiar are Uma or Parvati (wife of Siva) and Lakshmi (wife of Vishnu).

Saiva Images

If one were to ask a Hindu in Nepal what his faith was, he is likely to reply that he is a traveler along the path to Siva (*sivamargi*). In the valley the expression *sivamargi* denotes a Hindu in general, even if the person is a Vaishnava (believer in Vishnu as the supreme deity) or a Sakta (believer in the Great Goddess as the supreme deity). In the form of Pasupatinath (lord of the animals), Siva is the universal god of the valley and is venerated by Hindus and Buddhists.

Generally, Saivas (followers of Siva) worship their god in a symbol known as a linga, which literally means "sign" or "gender." A linga is a plain cylinder with rounded top rising from a container with a spout to drain off excess fluids. Like all worshiped images, the linga is regularly lustrated with various liquids, such as consecrated water, milk, curds, and clarified butter. Because of its shape, the linga is said to symbolize Siva's sexual organ, and its support with spout is characterized as yoni, symbolizing the female principle. The linga is also considered to be the cosmic pillar. When embellished with one or more faces (S30), it is known as a *mukhalinga*, the word *mukha* meaning "face."

Among Siva's benign forms, the most popular in the valley is known in iconographic parlance as Uma-Mahesvara (S8). In this composition, Siva, also known as Mahesvara (the great god), is represented, usually seated, with his spouse Uma. In contrast to Indian Uma-Mahesvara steles, Lichchhavi- and Transitional-period Uma-Mahesvaras, usually carved in small reliefs, were rendered with a greater penchant for the narrative. The sons, Ganesa and Karttikeya, and attendants of the gods may also be included in the Uma-Mahesvara tableau.

Two benign forms not frequently depicted in Nepali art include Siva and his consort in an androgynous composite known as Ardhanarisvara (half-woman, half-lord). This androgynous image (see S15) was devised by Indian artists to emphasize the nonduality of divine nature. The other benign image depicts Siva dancing on the back of his bull. In this form, known as Nrityesvara, Siva is presented as the lord of dance. Siva is the guru (supreme teacher) of all the performing arts, and his dance symbolizes the entire cosmic process.

The cult of Bhairava, the terrifying aspect of Siva, enjoys great popularity in the valley. The belief in Bhairava is also universal. As Mary Slusser has written in *Nepal Mandala*,

A god to be feared and placated with blood and alcohol, Bhairava is one of the paramount maleficent deities of the Valley. . . . Especially closely associated with the Mother Goddesses (Mātṛkās), whose cult similarly permeates Nepalese life, Bhairava is equally at home in vihāras *and in the temples and shrines of all the deities, Buddhist and Brahmanical {Hindu}. He lurks in the home, in the fields, and at the cremation ghats, and even dwells in holes in the roadway or the wheels of vehicles. In short, wherever the Nepali is, physically and psychologically, Bhairava is not far away.*[8]

The variety of Bhairava images made in the valley is well represented in the collection by several examples. An impressive wood shrine (S58) and gilt bronze (S56) are typical of Bhairava images worshiped in the valley. They are very similar to Buddhist Mahakala figures. Attached to the lotus base of the gilt bronze is the masklike head of the god Bhairava, who plays an essential role during the annual Indra festival. Into his mouth are inserted pipes through which beer is dispensed to the devotees. A little bronze (S59), no doubt meant for a small domestic altar, has a slightly more elaborate spout (see also S4). In addition to the masklike head attached to the large bronze, the collection also includes an example in terra-cotta, a favorite medium for Bhairava heads (S60) used in festivals.

Vaishnava Images

The god Vishnu is represented in Nepal in a number of different forms. He is most commonly depicted as a regal figure standing firm and erect and holding four attributes: the conch, club, lotus, and wheel. In stone reliefs and paintings (P11, P26), he is frequently accompanied by his spouse Lakshmi and mythical bird mount, Garuda. In bronzes his companions were often separate attachments. This image type was commonly employed to represent the twenty-four emanatory forms of the god, twelve of which are portrayed in P11 and P26. Each emanation symbolizes one of the twenty-four categories of one of the principal systems of Indian philosophy known as Samkhya. The emanatory forms differ in name, coloring, and disposition of the four attributes mentioned earlier. In terms of independent images of the god, the Nepali Vaishnavas reveal a distinct preference for the emanation known as Sridhara (bearer of prosperity). In the Garudasanamurti, the representation of Vishnu riding his avian mount (S1), the god is depicted in his Sridhara form. This is the principal image of Changu Narayan, the oldest, continuously worshiped Vaishnava sanctuary in the Himalayas, founded sometime before A.D. 464. The Garudasanamurti was repeatedly copied in the valley through the nineteenth century, although no two versions are exactly alike.

A second important concept in Vaishnava iconography is that of the avatar or incarnation. Hindus believe that as the preserver of the universe, Vishnu periodically assumes an appropriate form to rescue the world whenever it is overburdened with evil forces. Although many avatars are described in religious texts, generally only ten forms are represented in art. No bronze or stone image of an avatar is represented in the collection, but the group of ten is collectively portrayed in an elaborate painting (P26).

One of the most important Vaishnava rites in the valley is known as Anantavrata, which is performed on the fourteenth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadra (August–September). Ananta (endless) is the primordial serpent that forms Vishnu's couch when he is in his periodic cosmic sleep. The rite emphasizes the identity shared by the serpent and god and is performed by Vaishnavas for longevity and prosperity. Observed by king (P26) and commoner (P11) alike, the occasion was frequently commemorated by the dedication of a painting or a bronze. The image of Vishnu in such representations is usually distinguished by the snake canopy; otherwise, the image is represented in the Sridhara form.

Vaishnavas in Nepal frequently employed handscrolls for didactic purposes. Although the collection does not include a Vaishnava handscroll, it does contain model-books depicting stories from the *Ramayana* (D2) and *Bhagavatapurana* (D6), two important Vaishnava texts. The *Ramayana* illustrations were rendered in the fifteenth century and are probably the oldest known sketches made in the valley. Two paintings of the *Bhagavatapurana* are also in the collection (P35). This text narrates the life of Krishna, who is considered to be a manifestation of Vishnu and the focus of an independent cult in India. Although the Krishna cult was known in Nepal during the Lichchhavi period, it did not attain wide popularity until the Malla period as a result of Indian influences from Mithila and Bengal, where devotional cults around Krishna experienced a resurgence in the fifteenth century. Several later model-books also include images of Krishna (D21).

This brief discussion of Vishnu images may be concluded with a few words about an iconographic peculiarity in one of the figures in the collection. In the plaque dedicated in A.D. 983 (S13), the god is represented with an erect penis. This is probably a unique depiction. In the Indic iconographic tradition, the erect penis is generally associated with Siva and certain Buddhist deities whose forms were influenced by Saiva images. In the Hindu context, an erect penis symbolizes a perfect yogi who has complete mastery over the sexual impulse. Seminal retention is one of the highest aims of yogic discipline, and an ideal yogi is often referred to as an *urdhareta* or one who can channel his seminal fluids up the

spinal column to the brain. It was, therefore, customary to show Siva with an erect penis since he is regarded as the archetypal yogi. Vishnuism also emphasizes yogic principles, and in certain Indian images Vishnu is portrayed as a yogi.[9] Although no other Vishnu image in Nepal so explicitly demonstrates a Saiva trait, Siva and Vishnu are very closely identified in the valley. It is not uncommon to have a linga, the symbol of Siva, represented above a Vaishnava image, and the invocation verse in the royal mandala in the collection (P26) clearly emphasizes their identity.[10]

This identity was emphasized in the Indic tradition as well with the creation of a representation known as Harihara, in which one half of the form represents Vishnu and the other half represents Siva. In the bronze plaque the Nepali artist may have intended to suggest this coalescence or he may simply have wanted to emphasize Vishnu's yogic aspect.

Images of the Great Goddess

Over the centuries, the Great Goddess has assumed numerous forms and shapes in the valley and is known variously as Bhagavati, Devi, Durga, Sakti, *mai* (mother), and *ajima* (grandmother). She is worshiped in many forms, from a simple, undressed stone—her most ubiquitous symbol—to elaborate images that announce her cosmic magnificence and splendor. As Lakshmi she is frequently represented with Vishnu and as Uma, with Siva. In both forms she is depicted essentially as a beautiful woman simply holding a lotus. The lotus-bearing form has been used widely in Nepal to portray the two principal Hindu goddesses as well as the Buddhist Tara. An exact identification of an isolated figure is therefore extremely difficult.

The most prevalent form of the Great Goddess shows her with eight, ten, or eighteen arms engaged in the destruction of demons, most commonly Mahishasura, or the buffalo demon (S17). The duel between the goddess and Mahishasura forms the principal story in the *Devimahatmya* (glorification of the great goddess), the bible of the Saktas, as the exclusive devotees of the goddess are called. Nepali artists, however, also depicted her killing two other demons known as Sumbha and Nisumbha. Durga killing Mahishasura was also repeated nine times in the Navadurga (nine durgas) mandala (P9). Once again, as with other Hindu deities, the Navadurgas are also worshiped by Buddhists. The number and iconographic forms of the Durgas do not vary but their names do, and they are venerated collectively and individually. Although their cult was known in India, where each Durga has a different name, the valley seems to have preserved more evidence of their worship than the subcontinent.[11]

Another group of goddesses worshiped collectively is the Ashtamatrika, or Eight Mothers. In India the Mother Goddesses were more commonly worshiped in a group of seven, eight, nine, or sixteen; they originally may have numbered six. Their principal function is to increase fecundity in women, and to protect, specifically, the newborn infant and, generally, the family. From earliest times, they were propitiated with animal sacrifice and blood. In one form or another the primordial Great Goddess, whether as an individual or group, was probably venerated all over the subcontinent and in Nepal. By the fifth century, when the *Devimahatmya* was very likely composed, they were elevated as a manifestation of the Great Goddess, each of the six being considered to be the energy or power (sakti) residing in each of the six major gods: Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, and his avatar Varaha, Kumara, and Indra. Thus, they came to be known as Brahmani, Mahesvari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Kaumari, and Indrani. To these six was added Chamunda, or Kali (S32), an ancient goddess of dread and death, and, collectively, the seven formed the retinue of the Great Goddess in her battles against her enemies in the *Devimahatmya*. Still later, the number was expanded to eight, with the addition of yet another cosmic manifestation of the goddess known as Mahalakshmi. This group of eight, the Ashtamatrika, is especially venerated in the valley. Their temples and shrines are numerous, and some of their images

represent the oldest existing sculptures in the region. Although feared and propitiated, the fact that these goddesses are addressed as mothers and grandmothers—which seems to be a peculiarity of the Newars—and are worshiped with equal devotion by Hindus and Buddhists, reflects their universal popularity in the valley. Apart from their collective cult, each goddess is worshiped individually, which also seems to have been a peculiarity of the local form of Hinduism. Generally in India, the Seven Mothers are venerated in a group, with the exception of Varahi and Chamunda. Moreover, of the entire group Chamunda is the only goddess who is given an awesome and macabre form meant literally to instill fear in her devotees. The other six or seven are pleasant to look at, even though some, like Varahi and Kaumari, have their own peculiarities. Because the Mother Goddesses are the embodiments of the energy of the various gods, apart from borrowing their names, they also adopt their iconographic traits and attributes. Collectively, the Eight Mothers are closely associated with the Eight Bhairavas, who are their spouses. As has been forcefully stated by Slusser, the goddesses in Nepal form an "encompassing host," and "the abundant and varied female divinities who dwell in the Kathmandu Valley are omnipresent and all-pervading in Nepalese culture."[12]

Images of Other Hindu Gods

Among the many Hindu deities worshiped in the valley are Ganesa, Indra, and Kumara—focal points of individual cults—and groups known as the Dikpalas, or Eight Guardians of the Directions, and Navagrahas, or Nine Planets. Universally venerated by Hindus and Buddhists, Ganesa is the god of auspiciousness as he is in all Hindu societies. The son of Siva and Uma, he is distinguished by his elephant's head. In the valley, he is known as Vinayaka, and four of his temples symbolizing the cardinal directions are especially sacred. In his representation as Manavinayaka (D8), Ganesa is shown dancing, a particularly popular depiction. The god's usual mount is the rat or mouse, but in some forms he borrows his mother's lion.

In Hindu mythology Kumara, also known as Karttikeya, is Ganesa's younger brother, although neither is the natural son of Uma. Kumara probably has a more ancient pedigree than Ganesa. While Ganesa is the beneficent god of auspiciousness, Kumara is the divine general. Kumara's mythic personality is complex, for he is also closely associated with the Mother Goddesses, probably from a time when they had not yet become embodiments of sakti, the energy residing in male deities. In the valley, Kumara is also identified with the deity Ghantakarna (bell-eared one), and an image of the dancing Kumara in the collection is specifically identified as Ghantakarna (D8). In India Ghantakarna is an ancient village god, and neither he nor Kumara is generally shown dancing. Images of a dancing Ganesa are familiar in India, but only in Nepal do we encounter his brother dancing. In keeping with their general penchant for depicting their deities as adolescents, the Nepalis often portray Kumara as a young boy, especially in Uma-Mahesvara reliefs (S8). Generally, the most distinctive features of Kumara are his peacock mount and six heads, which he developed to suckle his six foster mothers, the Pleiades.

The ancient Indian god Indra, the most powerful member of the Vedic (c. 1500 B.C.) pantheon, enjoys great popularity in the valley, where an important annual harvest festival, observed by Hindus and Buddhists, is celebrated during the month of August. Indra was certainly familiar in the Lichchhavi period, but whether the festival was observed then is not known. Curiously, few images of Indra are made of stone, and no temple is dedicated to him. Rather, his images—made mostly in metal or wood—are brought out during festivals and paraded in elaborate processions. Indra festivals, known as Indparab or Induja, are still celebrated in parts of India, especially in Bihar and Bengal, but no such images are paraded there. Furthermore, the Nepali image of Indra (S42) is a distinct creation of the local artists and no exact forebear in the Indic tradition is known.

Indeed, no image of Indra in Nepal can be dated much earlier than the tenth century, and certainly the characteristic form represented in the collection appears to have been an invention of Transitional-period artists. Indra may be distinguished in the valley by his peculiar crown, third eye placed horizontally on his forehead, and thunderbolt attribute. His mount is the elephant, which is rarely included in his independent images, although as the divine regent of the East, he frequently sits on the animal in painted representations (P26).

The cults of the Navagrahas and Dikpalas are common to Hindus and Buddhists. The Navagrahas include Surya (Sun), Chandra (Moon), Mangal (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Brihaspati (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), and Sani (Saturn) as well as two other phenomena known as Rahu and Ketu. Rahu is the demon who causes eclipses of the sun and moon; Ketu literally means "comet." Since astrology plays an important role in the life of the Nepali, the Navagrahas are frequently encountered in art. Like Ganesa, the Dikpalas and Navagrahas are appeased or propitiated during every ceremony or rite, whether religious or social. Of the Navagrahas, only the sun-god enjoyed an independent cult, although the moon-god was frequently represented in both stone and bronze. Both are, however, often present in Hindu and Buddhist paintings (P8, P11). All nine, as well as the signs of the zodiac, are included in the seventeenth-century Vaishnava mandala (P26).

The Dikpalas are also survivals of the ancient Vedic gods. Indra, king of the gods, presides over the East; Varuna, lord of the ocean, over the West; Kubera, god of wealth, over the North; and Yama, god of death, over the South. The regents of the four corners are Agni, god of fire, who rules the Southeast; Vayu, god of wind, rules the Northwest; Isana, a form of Siva, rules the Northeast; and Niririti, god of dread, rules the Southwest. No independent cult evolved around these eight divine guardians, but like the Navagrahas, they are invoked in every religious ritual, especially those associated with buildings. They are frequently included in Hindu and Buddhist mandalas and *paubhas* to invoke their protection of the consecrated area.

Buddhist Deities

In Nepal Buddhist male and female divinities are as numerous as Hindu deities. Like Hindus, Buddhists invoke and represent their divinities either as individuals or in pairs, often in the company of numerous acolytes and subsidiary figures. The innumerable deities are neatly classified into groups and families presided over by one of the five transcendental Buddhas of the Vajrayana pantheon. Vajrayana Buddhism denotes the culmination of the long evolutionary process of a faith whose history began with Buddha Sakyamuni. Although the Buddha himself did not encourage the observance of religious rituals involving gods, by the birth of Christ, Buddhism had split into various religious and philosophical systems that had adopted many devotional cults involving the veneration of images. Buddha Sakyamuni was no longer regarded as an isolated human being but as one in a chain of innumerable Buddhas and worthy of worship. This concept was responsible for creating many Buddhas of the past and future as well as transcendental Buddhas, five of whom became distinguished in Vajrayana in conformity with the four directions and center of the universe and five fundamental elements basic to nature: earth, water, air, fire, and ether. In addition, Buddhists developed the radically important concept of a bodhisattva, thereby introducing a host of divine beings whose primary role was to save others. A bodhisattva is a perfected human being who compassionately refrains from entering nirvana in order to help others. In point of fact, many imaginary bodhisattvas were created, who, through compassion and wisdom or knowledge, aid the sentient being along the path that is as indestructible as the diamond. In a sense, therefore, most Buddhist deities were intellectually created and embody both compassion (*karuna*) and wisdom or knowledge (prajna). While the final state

of grace (*bodhichitta*) in Vajrayana Buddhism is the void or emptiness (*sunyata*), Buddhism uses nature's sexual polarity to symbolize the two constituents, compassion and wisdom. Compassion is embodied in the male and wisdom, in the female. Thus, Buddhist goddesses are generally designated by the term prajna (wisdom) instead of the Hindu expression sakti (energy), although typically in the valley all goddesses are addressed as Sakti or Bhagavati and all gods are Bhagavan.

Many Buddhist deities—such as Bhutadamara, Mahakala, and Samvara—reflect both conceptual and iconographic features of the Hindu god Siva, while many goddesses—such as Tara or the Pancharaksha (five protective divinities)—are closely related to some of their Hindu counterparts. Most attributes are shared by both Hindu and Buddhist deities. The attribute or weapon held in the hands of a Buddhist god may be further embellished with the thunderbolt (*vajra*). The Buddhas themselves, however, have distinct forms, and no Hindu deity resembles a Buddha. Thus, the presence of a Buddha either in the crown of a figure or along the top of a painting clearly indicates the Buddhist affiliation of an object. Moreover, an image may also bear an inscription incised or painted on the base, or the back may contain the stock Buddhist creed,[13] which distinguishes the similar icons of the two faiths. In certain esoteric images, Buddhist deities are shown engaged in a vigorous sexual embrace, emphasizing the nonpolarity of the principles of compassion and wisdom. Hindus seldom employed such vivid sexual imagery in their images, even though Hindu temples are often adorned with explicit and bizarre sexual forms.

Images of Buddhist Gods

Apart from the historical Buddha Sakyamuni, there are countless other Buddhas in the Buddhist pantheon, although only a limited number are represented in art. The principal are the five Buddhas of the past; five transcendental Buddhas of the Vajrayana pantheon; and Maitreya, Buddha of the future. Almost all Buddhas are represented similarly, each being conceived as a monk wearing three pieces of unstitched garments and distinguished by several supernatural signs such as the cranial bump (*ushnisha*) crowning a head covered with tiny curls, a dot between the eyebrows (*urna*), and elongated earlobes. In certain rituals the Buddha images are crowned and bejeweled, but their monastic features are not altered. The Buddhas are commonly portrayed frontally, standing or seated with their legs folded in the lotus posture. Only by their hand gestures and coloring and in a specific context can they be distinguished. The five colors generally used are blue, green, red, white, and yellow, although gold may be applied to any representation of a Buddha. The five hand gestures frequently displayed by Buddhas are reassurance (*abhaya*), touching the earth (*bhumisparsa*), meditation (dhyana), turning the wheel of the law (*dharmachakrapravartana*), and charity (*varada*). Of these, the gestures of reassurance, meditation, and charity may be exhibited by any Buddhist deity as well as any Hindu divinity. Touching the earth and turning the wheel of the law gestures are specifically Buddhist. The former is restricted only to certain Buddhas, while the latter, along with the simple gesture of teaching (*vyakhayana*), may be exhibited by any deity engaged in teaching or symbolizing wisdom.

Of the many Buddhas, only Maitreya, the future Buddha, is represented both as a bodhisattva and a Buddha. Since he is yet to appear on earth, he is at present only a potential Buddha, or in other words a bodhisattva. There is yet another Buddha whose cult is quite popular among Newari Buddhists. Known as Adi Buddha, or the primordial Buddha, he is a supreme being whose emanations include all other Buddhas. Often lavishly ornamented, his attributes are the bell and thunderbolt held in his hands crossed against his chest. These two implements are indispensable in all Vajrayana rituals and are among the most common attributes of Buddhist deities. The bell symbolizes wisdom and the thunderbolt, compassion.

Among the many bodhisattvas populating the Buddhist pantheon and most frequently represented in art are Avalokitesvara (also known as Padmapani), Maitreya, Manjusri, and Vajrapani. Avalokitesvara is worshiped in many forms, although the most popular is the standing image represented by several examples in the collection (S25, S29, P8). His distinctive emblem is the lotus (*padma*), and he is known as Padmapani (lotus-in-hand). The bodhisattva is the very embodiment of compassion. In his diverse esoteric or tantric forms, worshiped by the followers of Vajrayana, Avalokitesvara is given multiple arms holding various attributes and, in some instances, multiple heads. In one such manifestation, he is known as Amoghapasa (one with the unfailing noose) and presides over a special religious rite, much observed by Newari Buddhists, known as Ashtamivrata, during which images of the deity are consecrated. If the rite was performed by Indian Buddhists, little or no artistic evidence has survived.

After Avalokitesvara, the most important bodhisattva in Nepal is Manjusri (one with a sweet appearance).[14] Regarded as the embodiment of wisdom, he frequently carries the sword to dispel the fog of ignorance and the book. Like the thunderbolt and lotus, the book—representing no doubt the *Prajnaparamita*—is a common attribute held in the hands of most Vajrayana deities. Manjusri's shrine, near the better known stupa of Svayambhunath atop a hill in the valley, is a popular pilgrimage site for Hindus and Buddhists. As a divine fount of all wisdom, Manjusri is also often portrayed in the act of teaching (S22). One of the most interesting representations of the deity in Nepal is exemplified by a small bronze in the collection (S14). Here he is depicted as an adolescent boy holding the lotus on which rests the book. This representation is in keeping with his frequent characterizations in iconographic passages as a young boy (*kumara*). Manjusri is further identified with the Hindu Kumara, who also is often represented as an adolescent. The collection also contains an interesting drawing (D19) depicting the god's cosmic form. Clearly, it is a further elaboration of Siva's angry emanation known as Bhairava with whom Manjusri is identified in several texts.[15]

When presented as a bodhisattva, the future Buddha Maitreya (friendly one) does not differ basically from either Avalokitesvara or Vajrapani, although the latter sometimes wears an elaborate crown. An impressive bronze in the collection (S20) depicts Maitreya essentially as an ascetic figure distinguished by the waterpot held in his left hand and the stupa adorning his matted hair. The *nagakesara* flower, a frequent attribute of the bodhisattva in India, does not appear to have been popular in the valley.

The earliest bronze in the collection (S6) may well represent the bodhisattva Vajrapani, whose cult seems to have been more prevalent during the Lichchhavi period. In Lichchhavi representations his distinctive attribute, the thunderbolt, was often personified as a dwarf known as Vajrapurusha. A minor cult appears to have developed around this figure in the valley, and at least one shrine devoted to Vajrapurusha is still in worship. The collection also includes an independent image of Vajrapurusha (S16), which may have graced a domestic or monastic altar.

Many other Buddhist gods are represented in the collection, especially in the mandalas and rich iconographic sketchbooks. The most prominent appears to have been Samvara or Chakrasamvara. At least four representations of this deity, either alone or with his spouse, are in the collection (S46, S65, P13, P19). Why this particular deity was so popular among Newari Buddhists is not known.[16] Chakrasamvara is the presiding deity of the *Chakrasamvaratantra*, a tantric text that is not particularly different from other such texts of esoteric Buddhism. For instance, texts such as the *Bhūtaḍāmaratantra*, *Hevajratantra*, and *Kālachakratantra* were also familiar in the country, but Newari Buddhists seem particularly fond of Chakrasamvara and the rites associated with him.

Images of Buddhist Goddesses

Buddhist goddesses generally symbolize prajna or wisdom, the most important source of which is the text known as the *Prajnaparamita*. This text itself was considered so sacred that its manuscripts were literally worshiped by Buddhists. Moreover, as was the general custom of Buddhists to personify as well as deify abstract concepts, the scripture itself was conceived as a goddess called Prajnaparamita. She also came to be regarded as the magna mater of the Buddhist pantheon; all other goddesses, in so far as they symbolize wisdom, may be considered emanations of Prajnaparamita. At a more earthly level Buddhists conceived of many other goddesses whom they adored for more mundane blessings, such as wealth and welfare. Principal among them in the valley are the goddesses Tara and Vasudhara and the Pancharaksha.

Undoubtedly, the most popular Buddhist goddess in the valley is Tara, the female counterpart of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Like him she is a savior deity who protects her devotees from earthly dangers and calamities, such as fires, storms, and attacks from bandits and predatory animals. Her form and iconography are very similar to those of Avalokitesvara. She holds a blue lotus with her left hand as Avalokitesvara holds the pink flower. Like him also, she has many forms with multiple arms and heads, a few of which are illustrated in the sketchbooks. The Buddhist Tara was ultimately absorbed by the Hindus as a deity of transcendental knowledge known collectively as the Dasamahavidya, further explaining her universal popularity in the valley.

Vasudhara is considered to be the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Her name means "stream of gems," and she is the Buddhist counterpart of the Hindu Lakshmi. Although she was known in India and other Buddhist countries, nowhere else does her cult flourish as profusely as in the valley. Her popularity with the Newars may be because they are principally involved with agriculture and trade. Among the goddess's attributes are the sheaf of grain and spray of jewels. Her consort Jambhala, god of riches, was also popular and frequently represented in bronze, but, by and large, Vasudhara's appeal was stronger. The goddess is generally represented with two, four (S39), or six arms (S21, P17), and it is the six-armed variety that captured the Newari imagination. Curiously, the six-armed Vasudhara is rarely seen in India, and her earliest Nepali representation occurs in a manuscript copied in A.D. 1015.[17] There she is identified as Vasudhara of Kanchinagara, a designation undoubtedly referring to the well-known south Indian city of Kanchipuram (Conjeeveram). As with Amoghapasa, a special religious rite was performed for Vasudhara on which occasion the patron commissioned a painting or bronze. Stone images of Vasudhara, like those of Indra, are extremely rare, and no evidence indicates that she was known in the valley before the eleventh century.

The adoration of the Pancharaksha goddesses in Nepal also cannot be dated earlier than the eleventh century. The word Pancharaksha (five protections) refers to five charms or spells devised to ward off evil, destroy enemies, prevent and cure diseases, and protect from snakebite. Thus, their general purpose was to foster good health and success. These charms involve elaborate rituals and esoteric mantras (mystical formulae). By the eleventh century, the charms were personified as female deities whose images were painted on manuscripts (P6). They were also frequently included in mandalas (P17) and represented in bronzes.

Two unusual themes that may have been peculiar to Buddhism and its art in Nepal should be discussed. The collection contains a rare, fragmentary fifteenth-century painting depicting a lady distributing alms to mendicants and beggars (P15). She is the wife of Vanaratna (1384–1468), the last great Buddhist teacher to have gone from India to Nepal and Tibet. Apart from the inscription on the painting, it is also known from Tibetan historical sources that Vanaratna was a great philanthropist and all his life made gifts to the

poor and needy.[18] The dedication of such commemorative images upon the death of a person seems to have been especially popular with Nepali Buddhists. In another painting (P19), a portrait of the deceased is included at the lower right-hand corner; in a nineteenth-century bronze (S68) are two kneeling attendant divinities, identified with the donor's two dead relatives.

Finally, another rite indirectly associated with old age and death is called Bhimaratha. The expression is a corruption of *bhīmarātri* (terrible night).[19] The rite is still performed by Newari Buddhists when a person reaches the age of seventy-seven years, seven months, and seven days. It is a rite of passage from normalcy to senility, and after its performance the observer is considered no longer morally responsible for his actions. It is also a preparatory rite for death and ensures a safe passage to the Western Paradise of Amitabha Buddha. The occasion is commemorated by the consecration of either a painting or sculpture containing a representation of a stupa with an image of the goddess Ushnishavijaya (S66). The oldest symbol of Buddhism, the stupa was associated specifically with the physical demise of Buddha Sakyamuni. Ushnishavijaya, along with Amitabha or Amitayus, is explicitly implored for longevity, which no doubt explains her association with the Bhimaratha rite. It is possible that the rite was once performed by Hindus as well, for in parts of India the expression has survived and denotes senility in common parlance.[20]

Form and Function

The primary function of most works of art included in this catalogue was religious. Both Hindu and Buddhist deities are depicted in paintings and sculptures, and the same norms and styles were employed by artists to represent images of both faiths. The personal religious beliefs of the artist were unrelated to his vocation, which strikes at the very root of the notion that the artist, like the monk or priest, must belong to a particular faith and mentally invoke the deity before drawing the god's form. The artist certainly had to visualize the form and conceptualize the composition, but the creative process was not solely mental. Verbal and visual images were also at the artist's disposal and served as models for the final product.

The iconography of most deities is described in considerable detail in what is known as a dhyana (meditation or visualization). A dhyana was meant primarily to help priests and the adept mentally invoke the form of the deity. That the same dhyana was intended for the artist as well is evident by its inclusion in books discussing theories of art. A typical Buddhist dhyana, also known as a *sadhana*, describes the twelve-armed manifestation of Samvara (P13):

The worshiper should think himself as Sambara with a string of skulls over his forehead and the crescent moon on the top. He wears the six auspicious ornaments and a necklace of heads. He shows the Viśvavajra (on his headdress) and is three-eyed. He stands in the Āliḍha attitude and originates from a combination of all the letters of the alphabet. He tramples upon Bhairava and Kālarātri and is clad in tiger-skin. He shows the effigy of Akṣobhya on his crown and is blue in color. He carries the Vajra and the Ghaṇṭā; has matted hair, displays heroism and is embraced by his Sakti Vajravārāhī holding the Vajra and the Kapāla full of blood. She wears a garland of severed heads, is endowed with the five auspicious symbols, has dishevelled hair and no garment. She shows the image of Buddha (Vairocana) on her crown.[21]

Similar descriptions of Hindu deities are also frequently encountered in the sacred texts. The following dhyana in a tantric text of Durga describes a common form:

I adore the goddess who is like the fire of destruction, whose hairs are restrained by the crescent moon, whose brow and eyes are terrible to look at, who rides on an awe-inspiring lion, who holds in her hands Discus, Conch-shell, Sword, Shield, Bow, Arrow, Skull and Trident, and who has defeated the entire army of the demons.[22]

Whether Buddhist or Hindu, the dhyanas have a similar structure and contain information about the basic iconography and other salient details of the representation. Some dhyanas are even more detailed than the two quoted passages and provide additional information about age, dress, ornamentation, and physical appearance. For instance, a dhyana may describe the goddess as beautiful as a sixteen-year-old girl with full breasts and hips. The youthful appearance of the gods is usually emphasized, unless, of course, the subject demands an emaciated or bearded figure. Dhyanas provide the artist with the basic schema of the image. Hairstyles, crowns, ornaments, and attire are borrowed from either the yogis or royalty, and the texts are quite explicit in stating that the artist was free to follow the fashions and modes prevalent in his country or region.

Since the art was concerned primarily with divine images, the artist strictly adhered to canons of proportion. This requirement is not only made explicit in books on iconometry but also from the model-books in the collection. Some contain drawings of gods, while in at least one painting, the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11), the underlying grid that must first have been drawn by the painter can be seen. Studies have shown, however, that within certain broad, sanctified guidelines, considerable variation could be introduced.[23] Moreover, the basic unit of measurement was never constant, thereby allowing further variation. Generally, the unit of measurement was the width of the donor's fingers or outstretched palm. Iconographic traditions were diverse, and the same deity, especially among Hindus, is described differently in individual textual traditions. These divergencies in turn result in different forms, as demonstrated by comparing the Lichchhavi Uma-Mahesvara relief (S8) with two later examples (S51 and S62). They significantly differ from one another in stylistic representation and iconography.

Two principal kinds of art, each with a different function, prevailed in Nepal. The artist was called upon to depict images or represent religious myths and stories. Stone images were placed in a sanctum or niche and were sculpted in relief; only a few in situ in the valley, such as those of Garuda, were modeled in the round. Bronzes were fully modeled in the front and back, although the front received greater attention in terms of plastic mass and salient details. If the sculptural composition includes more than one figure, then invariably the principal deity is represented larger than the others. In painted compositions, the figures were also organized following hierarchical demands and the dictates of order and symmetry. No deviation from these norms was permitted, and even when human mortal figures were included at the bottom of the painting, a strict hierarchical arrangement was observed according to the relative importance of the personage. Certain idealized conventions were adhered to in depicting divine figures, and most deities stand or sit according to prescribed, ritualized postures. Emotions are expressed in a very limited fashion in such images, presumably because the gods are not meant to display human emotion, although they do behave very much like mortals.

In narrative sculptures and paintings, artists conveyed particular moods or emotions through ritualized gestures and postures rather than by individual facial expressions. For instance, in the ninth-century Uma-Mahesvara relief (S8) Uma's affection for her husband is subtly expressed by her reclining posture. Or again, an eighteenth-century artist (P34) has ably expressed the poignancy of a situation by depicting particular gestures and postures. Dramatic action is often conveyed, whether in single images of angry deities (D5) or narrative panels (D2), by certain well-established conventions. The posture involves the heroic diagonal, and the eyes, eyebrows, and mouth are modified suitably to express horror or anger. Similarly, landscape elements in narrative reliefs and paintings are conceptually rendered and symbolically employed without any attempt to create spatial illusion. Clarity and lucidity of image and composition—essential elements of any pictographic style—are the dominant features of narrative art in Nepal.

Sources and Influences

Although the art of Nepal is strongly conceptual, figurative, and related to a framework of established conventions, the artist was not impervious to stylistic change or innovation. Change occurred slowly in the Kathmandu Valley because of its geographic isolation and the function of the art itself. Nevertheless, the vitality of the Nepali artistic tradition is evident not only by its remarkable tenacity but also by its influence upon Tibet and, indirectly, China.

The earliest sculptures in the collection are from the Lichchhavi period, which was strongly influenced by Gupta India (A.D. 320–600). The primary artistic source for Lichchhavi Nepal was the Gangetic Valley in northern India, stretching from Mathura in the west to Bengal in the east. Nepali artists were obviously familiar with the norms and styles developed by their Indian counterparts in the major artistic centers of modern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, especially Gaya, Mathura, Nalanda, and Sarnath. If actual specimens were taken into the valley, none has survived. Indeed, to date, except for manuscripts, only one stone object has been found in the valley that is unquestionably of Indian workmanship.[24] While large numbers of Indian bronzes have been discovered in the more remote monasteries of Tibet and even as far off as Japan, not a single bronze of Indian origin has emerged from a Buddhist monastery in Nepal.

Nevertheless, the stylistic kinship of Nepali sculptures of the Lichchhavi period with works from various contemporary Indian centers is undeniable. Nepali artists may also have been familiar with the art of the Deccan and western India. For instance, the manner of depicting Uma as a languid, reclining figure (S8) is seen more commonly in Deccani reliefs rather than in those of northern India. The representation of Vajrapurusha in images of Vajrapani (S6) also occurs earlier in the Deccan than in the north. Or again, the minor detail of delineating the horizontally held conch in Vishnu's left hand (S1) is a feature encountered generally in western Indian Vishnu reliefs and not in those from northern India. Thus, although Lichchhavi art is closely related to Indian Gupta influences, in terms of form and content, a Nepali style is clearly recognizable.

Basically, the norms established during the Lichchhavi period continued to remain valid during the Transitional period, which is more richly represented in the collection for various reasons. Not only have more sculptures survived, but the earliest examples of Nepali painting are also from this period. The artist's repertoire, too, seems to have expanded considerably during this period with the incorporation of new cults and deities into both Hinduism and Buddhism. Few contemporary Indian bronzes have been

discovered in Nepal, but a large number of Buddhist manuscripts, copied and illuminated in east Indian monasteries, have been preserved in the religious establishments of the valley. While there is some relationship discernible between manuscript illuminations of Nepal and those produced in Bihar and Bengal, the two styles are quite distinct.[25] Moreover, the content of Nepali manuscript illumination is more diverse than that of India. Nepali artists appear to have been completely unfamiliar with the Jain tradition of painting or if they were familiar with it, were not influenced by it.

Nepali sculptors seem to have borrowed very little from contemporary Indian schools, either in style or iconography. Neither the Uma-Mahesvara nor Vishnu images made in the valley reflect any of the thematic or stylistic peculiarities of these subjects as represented in Bihar and Bengal. Or again, no Indian sculpture, either in stone or bronze, is as elaborate or impressive as the Nepali bronze representing scenes from the Buddha's life (S23), although the inclusion of the emaciated Buddha (see detail) indicates that the artist was familiar with Bodhgaya where a shrine was dedicated to this image. Nepali sculptors of the period depicted the sun- and moon-gods without their boots and coats of mail, a convention followed in southern rather than eastern India. By and large, Nepali artists of the Transitional period continued to follow the norms established by their forebears and did not borrow motifs or styles from contemporary Indian schools.

The distinct cultural and national character of Nepal was forged during the Early and Late Malla period, especially from the time of Sthitimalla. Although during this era no dramatic break occurred with the valley's Lichchhavi past and greater foreign influences are perceptible from Mithila and the Mughal and Rajput courts, nevertheless, Nepal, as it is known today, is essentially a legacy of the Malla period. It was during the Malla period, especially from the reign of Sthitimalla, that Hinduism began to assume increasing dominance with the consequent decline of Buddhism. All Malla rulers were Hindus, although not necessarily bigoted. Despite their weaknesses and eccentricities, Malla rulers were enthusiastic patrons of the arts, and most creative works of literature written in Sanskrit and Newari were composed during the Malla period. Newari now replaced Sanskrit as the court language, and, as clearly evident from the impressive group of model-books and priests' manuals in the collection, it became as important a language as Sanskrit by the fifteenth century. The other language popular with the courts and literati was Maithili. The common language of Nepal today, Nepali or Parbatiya, did not gain currency until the mid-seventeenth century. The recognition of Newari and consequent efflorescence of its literature instilled a sense of national consciousness among the populace, a consciousness reflected not only in drama, poetry, and music but also in the visual arts and architecture. Most surviving examples of typically Nepali temples are from the Late Malla period. The style had basically been formulated by the thirteenth century, although its roots have been traced to the Lichchhavi period. Also during this time Nepali artists became entrenched in Tibet, and some, like Aniko (active thirteenth century) even became masters of the imperial atelier in China.

While the impact of Maithili is perceptible mostly in literature and religion—especially in Vishnuism and the Krishna cult—after about 1600 contemporary Mughal and Rajput styles influenced Nepali painting. Through trade and pilgrimage, Nepal had always maintained a steady contact with India from the earliest times. Varanasi was a religious center for Nepali Hindus as Bodhgaya was for Buddhists. During the heyday of Buddhism in India, Nepali and Indian monks were in constant communication with one another. The two most important monks to visit Nepal were Atisa Dipankara, who went to Nepal in 1042 en route to Tibet, and Vanaratna, who seems to have settled in the valley and died there. Commercial and cultural intercourse aside, there appears to have been little political dealings between Nepal and India. A fourth-century Indian inscription states that the Nepali monarch was expected to be present with tribute at the court of the emperor Samudragupta (r. c. 340–75). Thereafter, we know only of the similar presence of the

Kathmandu ruler Mahendramalla (r. 1560–74) at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605). This visit resulted in the introduction, among other things, of Mughal manners and modes of dress at the Nepali courts and Mughal artistic conventions in Nepali painting.

A survey of the art of the Malla period until the seventeenth century reveals only slight influences from contemporary India. This is easily understood in terms of Buddhist art, for after the thirteenth century most monasteries in Bihar and Bengal were abandoned and very little Buddhist art was created in these regions. It is somewhat surprising, however, that Nepali artists of the period should have been so little influenced by contemporary Indian Hindu art. Except for minor iconographic forms, such as the images of the fluting Krishna, few Indian artistic styles seem to have reached Nepal during this period. The art of Malla Nepal is, however, of great importance for the historian of Indian religions and art. A great variety of tantric images rarely depicted in contemporary Indian art has been preserved in Nepali art. The *paubhas* are certainly the only surviving examples of a type of religious art that was once much more prevalent in India than the present evidence indicates. Although there is much textual evidence that both Hindus and Buddhists in India employed paintings on cloth—images as well as mandalas—only in Nepal and Tibet have examples of sufficient antiquity survived to demonstrate what the Indian paintings must have looked like. Thus, the *paubhas* in the collection, which are well represented in the Malla period, are of special significance for the Indian art historian.

While Nepal had little cultural impact on India, the cultural flow being almost unilaterally from India, Nepal's association with Tibet was based on mutual influences. As early as the seventh century Tibet may have exercised some political hegemony over Nepal, at least for a brief time, when the powerful Tibetan monarch Songtsen Gampo (r. c. 609–49) married a Nepali princess. Thereafter, until today, Nepali artists have always been in great demand in Tibet. Monasteries of the Sakyapa religious order in Tibet seemed especially partial to Nepali craftsmen. After the twelfth century, when most Buddhist monasteries in India were destroyed, Nepal filled the vacuum for a time for the Tibetans. From the fourteenth century, with the increasing importance of Hinduism in the Kathmandu Valley, firm establishment of Buddhism in Tibet, and slow infiltration of Tibetan Buddhism among the various tribes of northern Nepal, Tibet asssumed prominence as the fountainhead of Buddhism both in the Himalayas and China. The Newars have always shared an affinity with the people and culture of Tibet, and it was not difficult for them to cultivate an even closer relationship after the fourteenth century. Important Tibetan monasteries, such as Tashilumpo, became focal centers of pilgrimage for Newari Buddhists.

It is precisely for the history of post-fifteenth-century Tibeto-Nepali artistic traditions that the collection contains extremely important material. Not only did Newari artists work in Tibet, but they brought back with them paintings executed and consecrated in important Tibetan monasteries, which in turn influenced Nepali art, especially after the seventeenth century. Furthermore, some artists' model-books conclusively demonstrate that Tibetan-style pictures were often painted in the valley and taken to Tibet. And, some texts relate significantly to the history of Tibetan painting. On the whole, the museum's extensive collection conclusively demonstrates that Nepal's contribution to Asian Buddhist art was fundamentally important and totally disproportionate to the size, population, and resources of the diminutive yet picturesque Kathmandu Valley.

Notes

1. Landon 1976, 1: 181–82.
2. For a thorough discussion of the history and culture of the Kathmandu Valley, see Slusser 1982.
3. See Macdonald and Stahl 1979 and Pal 1983.
4. See Slusser 1982 and Macdonald and Stahl 1979.
5. Slusser (1982, 1: 41–51) has conclusively demonstrated that the designation Thakuri is a misnomer and should be abandoned.
6. Slusser 1982, 1: 89.
7. See Pal 1983.
8. Slusser 1982, 1: 235.
9. Banerjea 1956, pp. 398–427. Indeed, a principal component of the syncretic deity worshiped by the Hindus as Vishnu is Narayana who, like Siva, is a preeminent yogi.
10. The verse not only invokes Siva, but in the bottom row of the painting the central figure of a dancing deity represents Siva.
11. See Slusser 1982, 1: 322–23, and Tailbet 1978.
12. Slusser 1982, 1: 307.
13. The creed may be translated as follows: "Of all the things springing from a cause / The cause has been shown by him 'Thus-came' / And their cessation too / The Great Pilgrim has deciphered."
14. Curiously, no important temple in the valley is dedicated to Manjusri.
15. See, for instance, Mukherji 1964.
16. The fifteenth-century Indian teacher Vanaratna, who lived for many years in the valley, was especially devoted to the cult of Chakrasamvara (see Roerich 1979, p. 799).
17. Pal 1967c, p. 18.
18. Roerich 1979, pp. 797–804.
19. Pal 1977a.
20. The expression *bhimarati* is commonly used in Bengali to denote senility.
21. B. Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 161.
22. Quoted in Bhattasali 1929, pp. 204–5.
23. Banerjea 1956, pp. 621–23.
24. Pal 1974a, fig. 83. This is a head of Siva, modeled in the red sandstone typical of Mathura, now preserved in the National Museum in Kathmandu.
25. Pal 1978, pp. 36–64.

Color plates

Identified by catalogue number











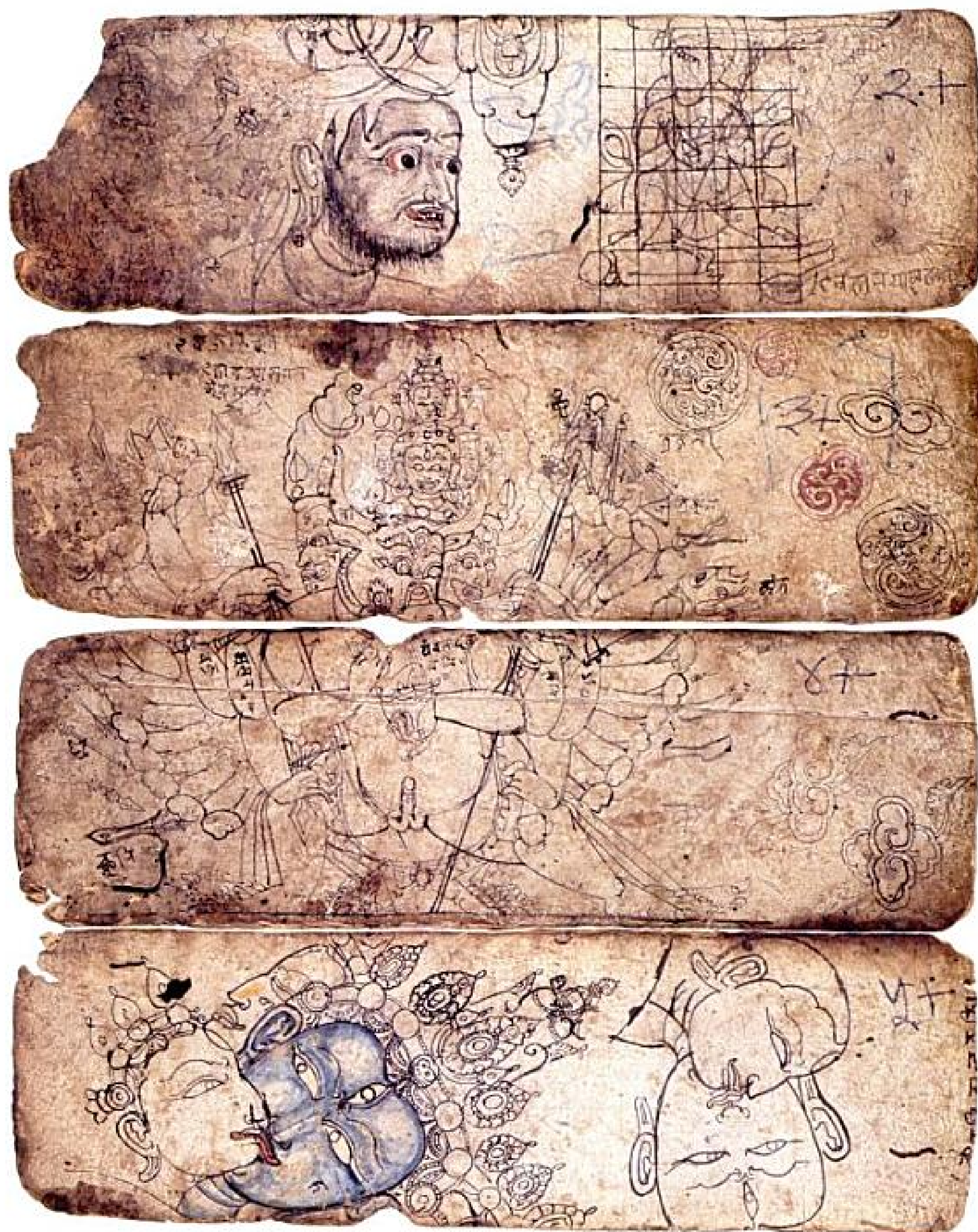




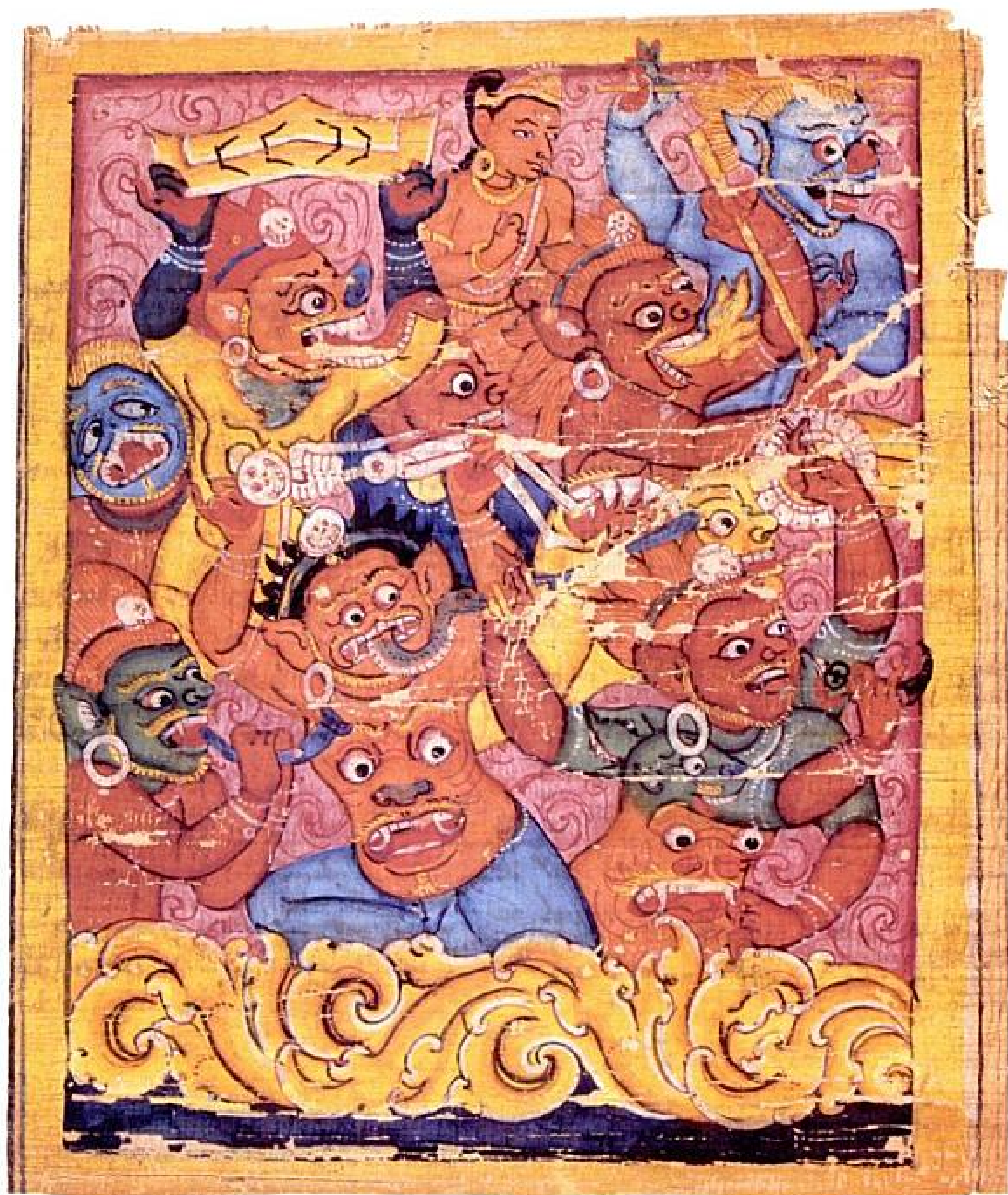


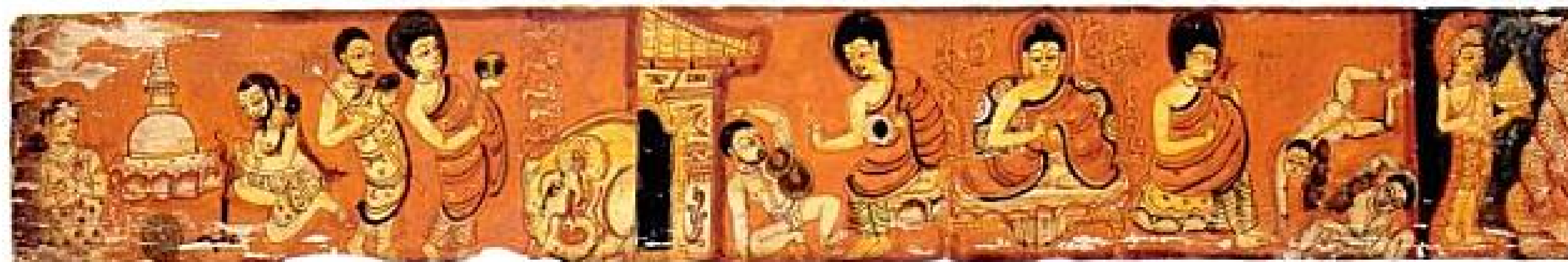
























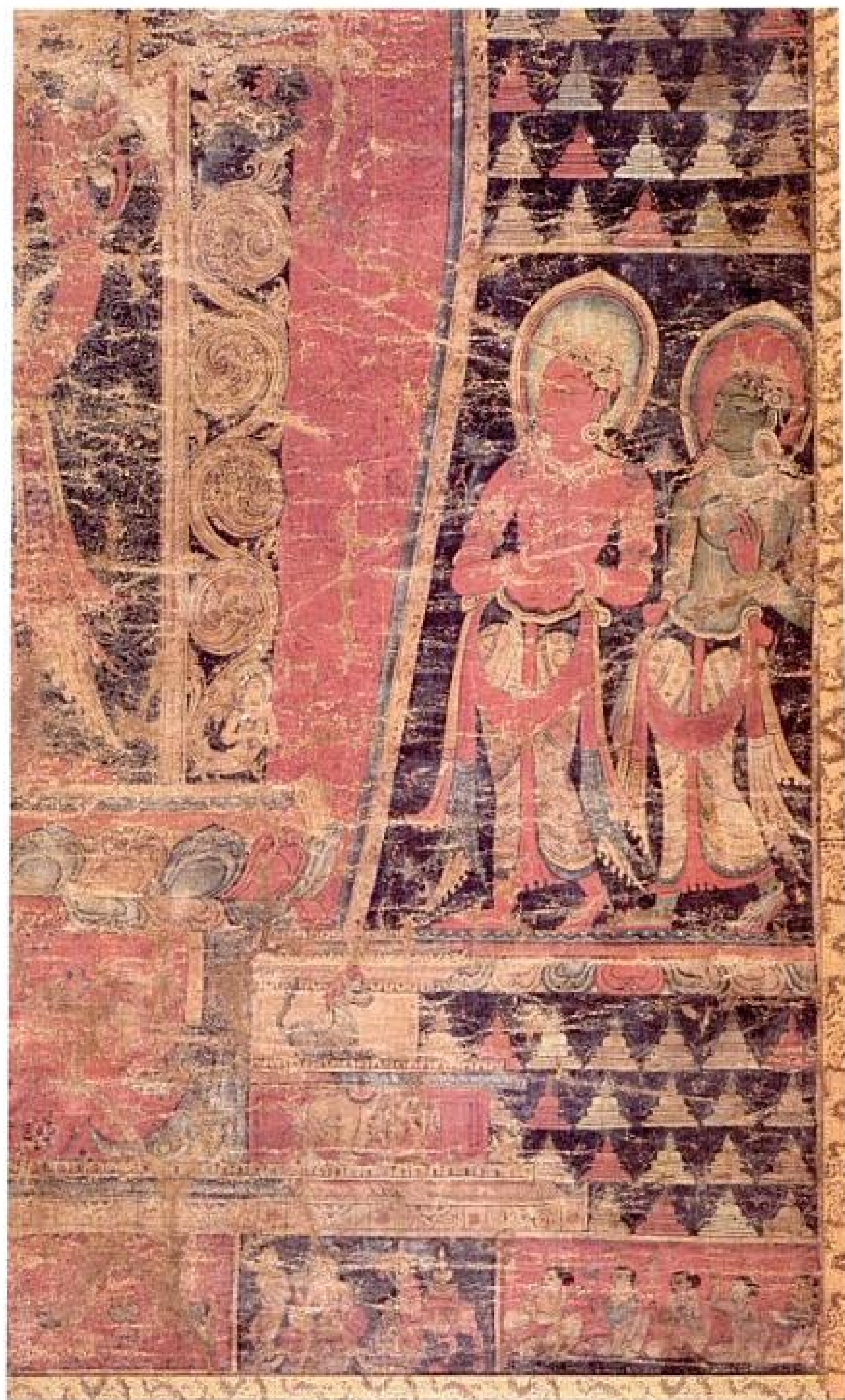






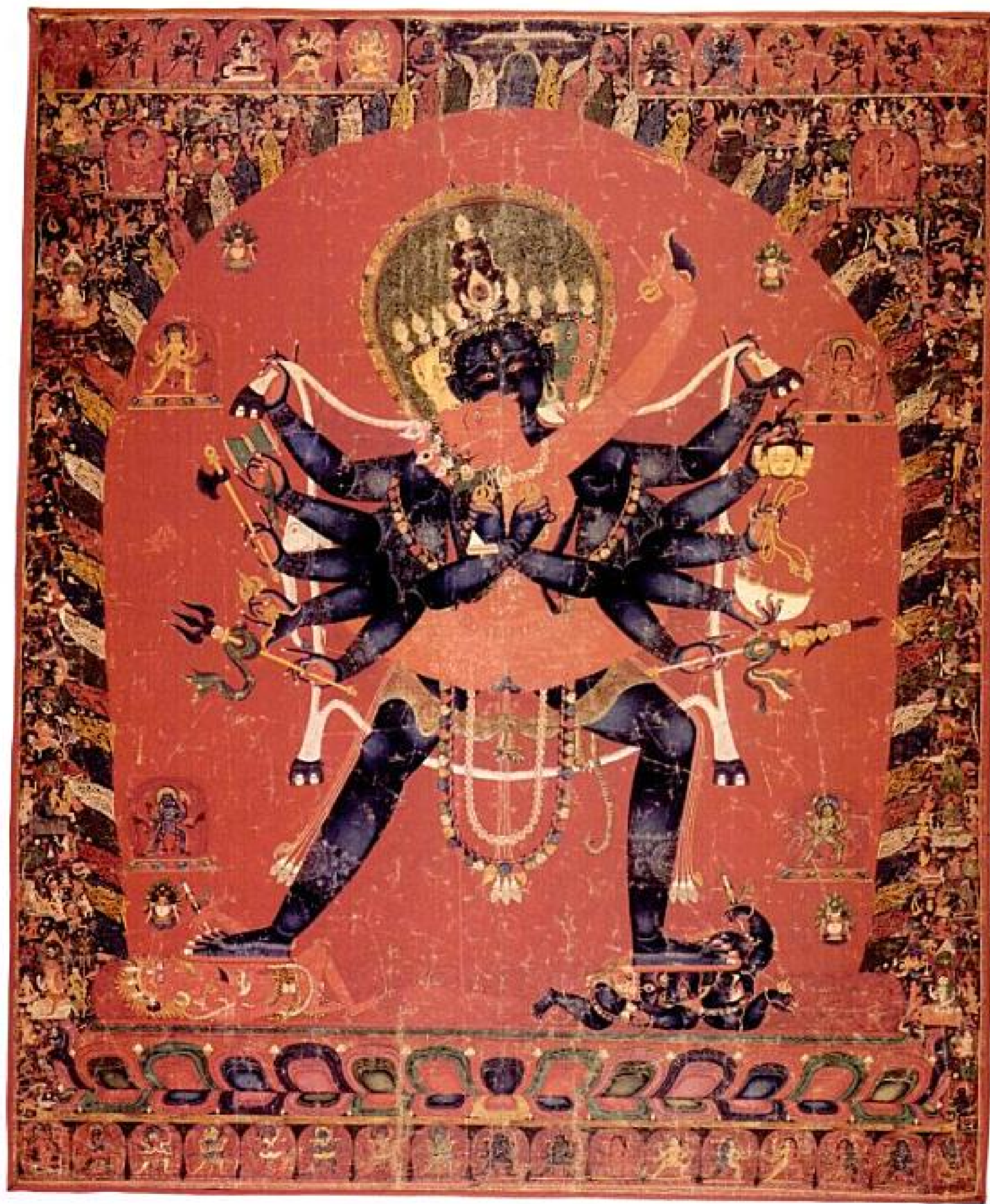
















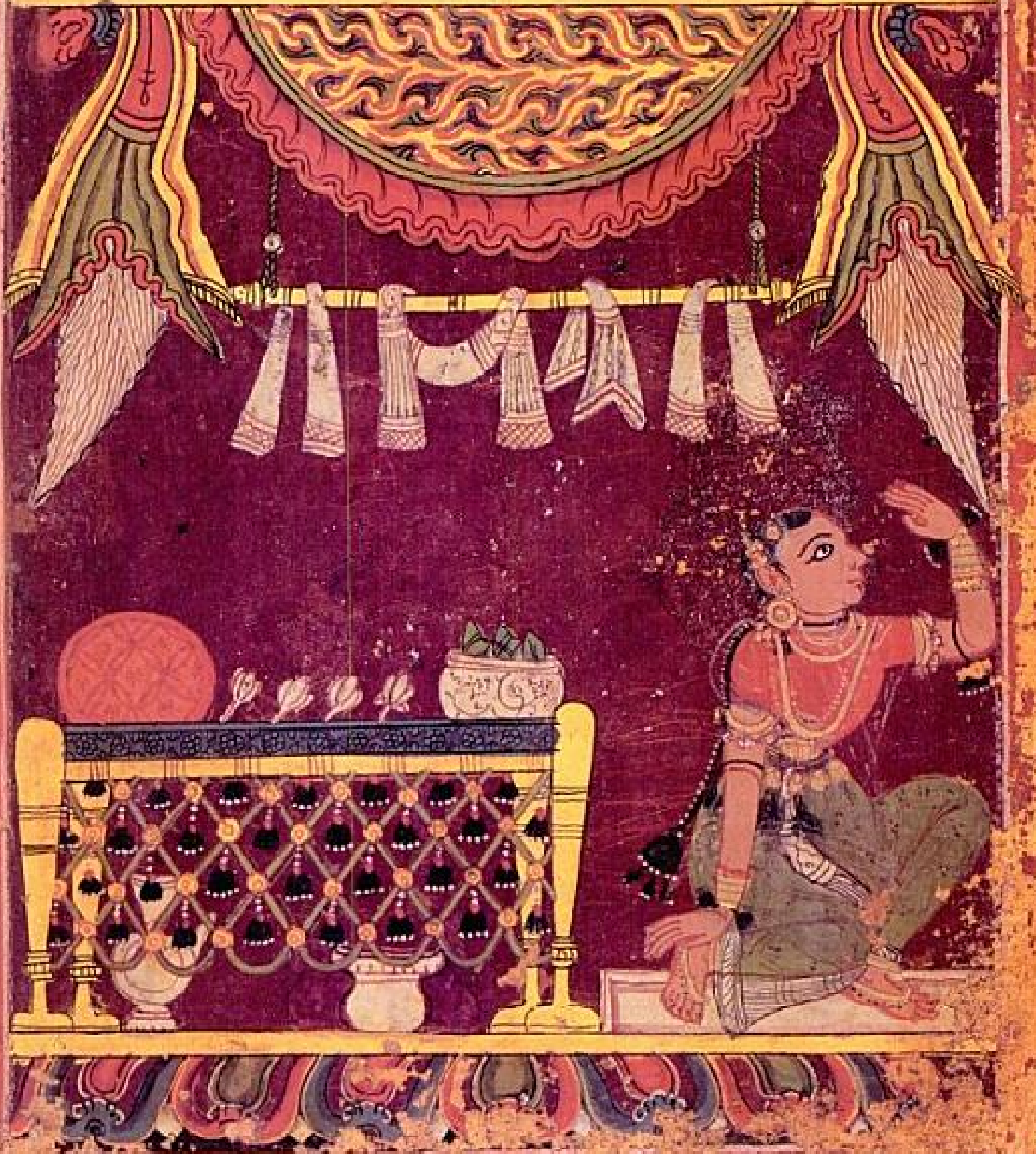






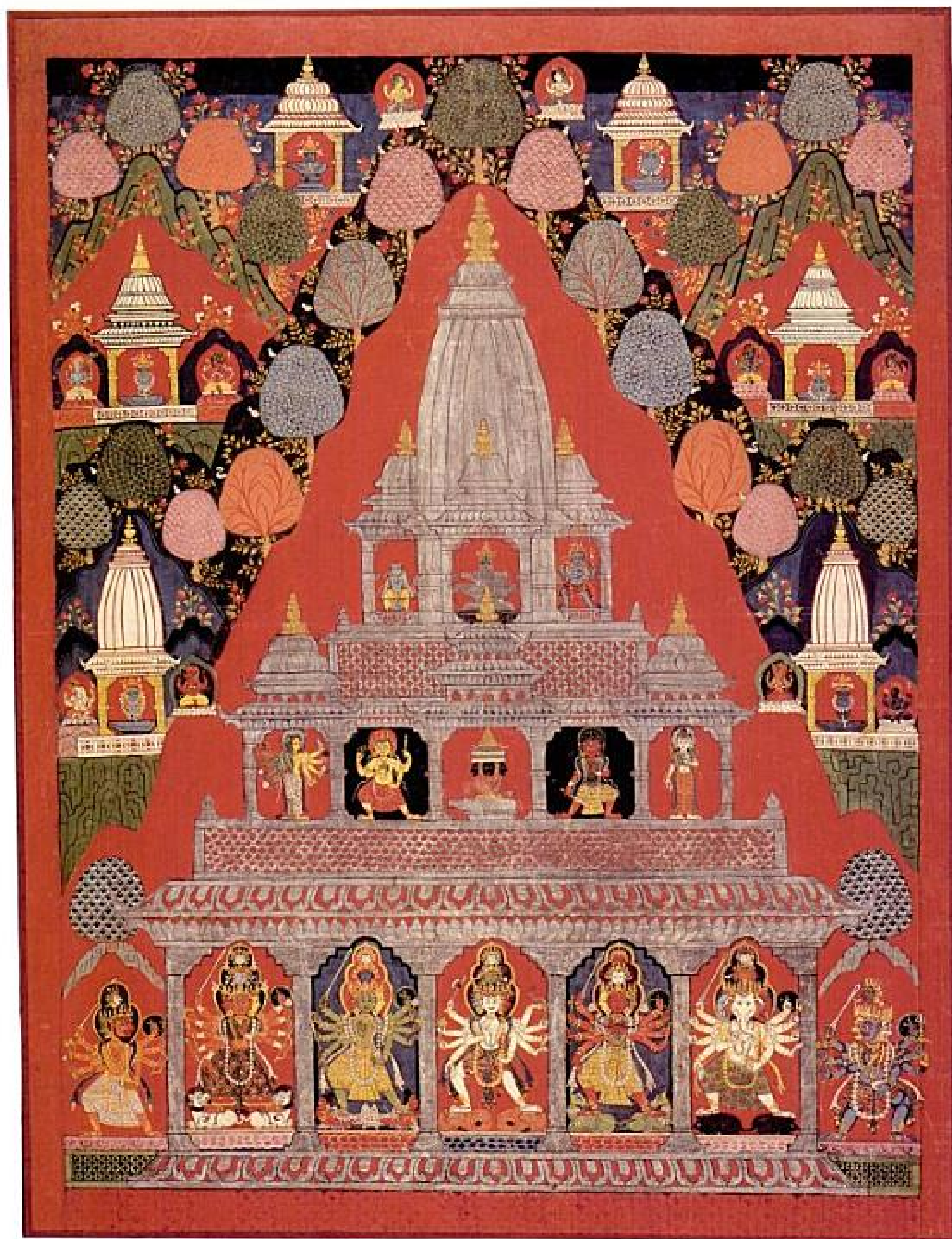





स्यावासवेश्मनिसुकल्पितत मध्ये, तांबूलपुष्पवसनैश्चसमंसुमज्जे । का
न्तस्यसंगसमयंसमवेक्षमाणा, साकथ्यतेकविवरैरिहवाससज्जा ॥ ३ ॥








रक्तबीजः





Sculptures



You find, among the Pebouns {Newars}, artists very distinguished in metallurgy. They manufacture all sorts of vases in gold and silver for the use of the lamaseries {monasteries} and jewelry of every description that certainly would reflect no discredit on European artists. . . . They are so skillful . . . that they are sent to the very interior of Tartary to decorate the great lamaseries.

Abbé Huc, 1846[1]

Introduction

The principal media in which the Nepali sculptors worked—especially stone, metal, and wood—are well represented in the collection, which also includes several terra-cotta and ivory objects. Most sculptures were modeled in metal, the medium in which Newari artists have garnered deserved fame for more than a millennium. As early as the seventh century the excellence of their metalwork elicted the admiration of Chinese visitors.[2] The Newars were also equally adept in using wood, an important element in their traditional architecture.

The chronological range of the sculptures in the collection is impressive. Objects date from the seventh through the nineteenth century. Six sculptures (S13, S17, S52, S56, S65, S68) are dated by inscription, the earliest having been dedicated in the year A.D. 983. This plaque of the god Vishnu is the earliest known dated bronze from Nepal outside the country; an earlier example in the Changu Narayan temple in the valley is not accessible to the public.[3] Most sculpture collections outside Nepal consist largely of works from the Malla period (1200–1769), but the museum's collection is remarkably rich in material from earlier periods as well.

With the possible exception of an ivory comb (S54), all sculptures in the collection served a religious function. Interestingly, even the comb is adorned with the image of a god. Most stone sculptures are of modest proportions and once adorned small wayside or domestic shrines. Such modest shrines, often consisting of a small wall niche, are a common sight in the valley and are frequently encountered along narrow lanes in the older parts of cities and towns. They are also found in the courtyards of private houses where the images are likely to receive more regular offerings than those that grace wayside shrines. Often, the physical condition of the image indicates how quickly it was forgotten after installation or how popular it remained. The greater the potency of the image, the greater the erosion of its surface because of the devotees' constant rubbing of the image with vermilion and oils.

Most metal sculptures are made of a copper alloy. Only during the last three hundred years or so have Newari sculptors begun to use brass, however sparingly. Because of their high copper content, ungilded Nepali bronzes have a beautifully soft reddish patina. Gilding was an extremely popular art as was the practice of encrusting an image with semiprecious stones, such as agate, carnelian, coral, and turquoise. In some instances rubies were used, but generally Nepali patrons, unlike Tibetans, preferred modest inlaying. Neither were Nepali bronzes as richly etched with elaborate designs as were some Tibetan bronzes. Newari sculptors were equally adept both in casting and repoussé (beaten

metalwork). Most images were cast in the cire perdue, or lost wax, process and are usually one of a kind.[4] Molds were seldom employed, and multiple copies of an individual figure are rarely encountered. Repoussé was used frequently for architectural embellishments, furnishings, and sheaths for stone or terra-cotta figures. In fact, at least two plaques (S13 and S17) and the splendid *mukhalinga* (S30) were very likely used as encasements for stone images. It was especially common to fabricate a metal sheath for a plain stone linga.

The typical Nepali temple is made of brick, wood, and metal, the overall design having been determined by the requirements of wood architecture. Indeed, some of the finest sculptures produced by the Newars are made of wood and adorn temples still standing in the valley. The type of tympanum represented in the collection (S57) is a familiar element in Nepali temples. Images of temple deities were also carved in wood, and many Buddhist shrines in the valley contain superb examples. Most wood images were made in several parts, which were deftly joined and then elaborately painted. Furthermore, when enshrined, they were appropriately clothed and provided with individual crowns and ornaments. In many cases the pigment has worn off and been reapplied. Because of the tropical climate and frequent fires, which were recorded in the historical chronicles, few early wood sculptures have survived.

Lichchhavi Period
(A.D. 300–879/80)

Very little has been written about the art of terra-cotta in Nepal. Although less popular than wood, stone, or metal, terra-cotta has been used in Nepal since the remote past. The collection contains small terra-cotta objects (S2–5) that can with some certainty be assigned to the Lichchhavi period. Although the terra-cotta objects in the collection are small, much larger terra-cotta sculptures once existed in the valley. An inscription dated 573 states that a set of stone images of the Mother Goddesses was consecrated to replace an earlier group made of clay.[5] Very likely these earlier damaged sculptures were made from terra-cotta, as they often were at the time in India. The early terra-cotta figurines in the collection were all recovered from Dhumvarahi, a site that has not been thoroughly explored and excavated. Nevertheless, these finds and a magnificent sculpture of the incarnation of Vishnu as a boar provide strong evidence that Dhumvarahi was an important settlement during the Lichchhavi period.[6]

Although small in size, the two stone sculptures in the collection are exceptionally fine. One (S8) represents the Saiva Uma-Mahesvara theme, the other (S1) depicts the Garudasanamurti, a representation of Vishnu soaring through the sky to inspect his universe while riding his mount, Garuda. Vishnu is represented in a similar manner in the famous Changu Narayan temple. The Garudasanamurti theme was very popular with Vaishnavas and continued to be represented frequently into the Malla period. The Uma-Mahesvara image, probably carved toward the end of the Lichchhavi period, was certainly the most popular of all Saiva subjects. The Uma-Mahesvara is a type of family portrait, with representations of Uma and Siva and their sons and attendants. Both sculptures reflect the simplicity and elegance of form and iconography characteristic of Lichchhavi sculpture. The well-proportioned, graceful figures exude an air of serene elegance and radiate a gentle sensuality.

Equally fine are the museum's Lichchhavi bronzes, of which the mitered figure of a male deity (S6) is well known. Although small, it conveys imperious majesty. Another small bronze (S9), recently added to the collection, represents a playful Kumara who appears to be mimicking a dancer. It must once have belonged to an Uma-Mahesvara group; detached from its context, it remains a charming and lively sculpture displaying the artist's complete mastery in representing the human form in the round.

The bronze Buddha (S7) is perhaps the only figure among this early group that can be assigned with certainty to the Lichchhavi period because of the inscription on its base. The paleography of the letters conforms to that of other eighth–ninth century

inscriptions. The script used in Lichchhavi inscriptions was an adaptation of the Brahmi script of Gupta India (A.D. 320–600). Likewise, the sculptural styles of the period were also adapted from those prevalent in the metropolitan centers of northern India, such as Mathura and Sarnath.[7] Nepali sculptors seem to have preferred the more linear and abstract style of Sarnath rather than the ponderous volume and naturalism of Mathura sculpture. The practice of representing the attribute as a personified dwarf, as in the mitered deity (S6), was common in Gupta India, both in Uttar Pradesh and the Deccan. While the Uma-Mahesvara theme was not unknown in northern India, Gupta interpretations are not as elaborate as Nepali examples of the later Lichchhavi period. One peculiar feature of such Nepali reliefs is the more relaxed manner in which Uma sits almost in a semireclining posture beside her husband. This mode of expressing Uma's affection for Siva is encountered in the magnificent rock-cut reliefs of the Deccan and western India. Although Lichchhavi sculptors regarded the Gangetic Valley in northern India as their principal artistic source, they most certainly also knew of other traditions.[8]

Transitional Period
(A.D. 879/80–1200)

The group of sculptures in the collection from the Transitional period is numerically greater and thematically more varied than the Lichchhavi group. During the Transitional period, greater importance was placed on the images and rituals surrounding tantric cults and resultant expanded Hindu and Buddhist pantheons. This period is well represented in the collection by several dated sculptures in metal and stone, the Vishnu plaque of 983 (S13), being the earliest outside the country. A second dated sculpture of the period is a repoussé plaque dedicated in 1090 representing the goddess Durga (S17).

A comparison of these two plaques reveals the basically conservative nature of the Nepali tradition. Although the earlier plaque is more ornate, the two examples differ very little. A similar comparison can be made by examining the tenth-century wood dwarf (S11) and the eighth-century bronze attendant Vajrapurusha (S6). Indeed, in figural representation and composition, the Nepali tradition remained extremely conservative throughout its history. The sculptural norms established during the Lichchhavi period were valid through the Malla period. Whatever differences are perceptible relate to figural proportion, ornamentation, and decorative detailing rather than to the broader aspects of style. For instance, most sculptures attributed to the tenth and eleventh centuries exhibit a greater elongation of the figural form. This proclivity for tall, slim figures is especially evident in the impressive bronze depicting the androgynous form of Siva and Uma (S15) and the 1090 plaque representing the goddess Durga (S17). The arms and legs in both are particularly slender as if the sculptor was attempting to simulate the forms of pliant vines. The artists of this period were less concerned with volume than with attaining greater linear definition and a crisp silhouette. The conservative character of Nepali art is further indicated by the fact that some images and forms created by Lichchhavi sculptors retained their appeal well into the nineteenth century. This is especially true of such subjects as the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the standing goddess, the god Vishnu, and the seated Siva. Except for minor iconographic and decorative variations, the 983 Vishnu (S13) differs very little from the seventh-century Lichchhavi representation of the god (S1). The crown adorned with a lion's head or face of glory is typical of Lichchhavi Vishnu images and is an adaptation of the crown seen on Gupta Vishnu images at Mathura. The manner in which Vishnu holds the conch in his lower left hand is characteristic of Vishnu images of Lichchhavi Nepal and may have been a local variation or an adaptation from the Gujarat region of India. Details not generally appearing in earlier Vishnu images are the face of glory

in Vishnu's crown, the club with flames, and the wheel. Apart from such iconographic variations, also noteworthy are differences in the modeling of facial features and ornamentation of the Lichchhavi Vishnu and the 983 Vishnu. The almost austere simplicity of the Lichchhavi Vishnu contrasts sharply with the rich ornamentation of the later figure. The round face of the earlier Vishnu has almost a cherubic expression, whereas the face of the 983 Vishnu is more oval and the features more articulated.

A practice seldom followed by sculptors of the Transitional period was the representation of the attribute of a bodhisattva as a dwarf. The tenth-century wood example (S11) is therefore quite rare. It does, however, reflect the Nepali artist's continued penchant for sculpting cherubic figures. For instance, the bodhisattva Manjusri (S14) is often depicted in Nepali sculpture as a plump adolescent, just as the child Krishna is portrayed in Indian art. Another figure that seems peculiar to Nepali art is the cherubic personification of Vajrapurusha, the attendant of Vajrapani (S16). The figure was first encountered in a Lichchhavi sculpture (S6), which may have derived ultimately from an Indian sculpture of the Gupta period. By the Transitional period, a cult around this attendant figure developed in Nepal, and an impressive sculpture is still in worship in a temple in Patan.[9] This fascination with portraying boyish figures with plump bodies and innocent faces is also reflected in Malla-period sculptural representations of Garuda, Karttikeya, and Krishna.

Among other subjects that may have been introduced during the Transitional period—although some may have been also familiar in the Lichchhavi period—are the androgynous form of Siva and Uma (S15); Durga killing the buffalo demon; Tara (S12); and Vasudhara (S21). The Mahasri Tara with attendants is one of the finest Transitional-period bronzes, reflecting all the delicacy and subtlety of modeling and composition for which Newari sculptors were justly famous. That the Newars were equally adept in casting larger bronzes is evident from the impressive and handsome androgynous figure (S15). Not only is this the largest bronze in the collection, but it is also one of the largest to have survived from the country. Much larger bronze figures have survived in Tibet, however, and, together with literary evidence, they attest to the skill of the Newari sculptors in casting bronzes that are impressive both for their size and complexity. The excellence of Newari sculptors in casting complex figures is evident from the repoussé plaque representing Durga (S17), the small figure of the Buddhist goddess Chunda (S18), and the Vasudhara (S21). The iconography and composition of the Durga tableau are unique; surprisingly, representations of Durga from the Lichchhavi period are unknown. Nor are there any Lichchhavi sculptures representing Chunda and Vasudhara. Both subjects appear to have been introduced during the Transitional period. They all have in common a large number of arms. Only a few Lichchhavi figures are shown with more than four arms. The practice of depicting deities with more than four arms appears to have gained currency during the Transitional period and became even more popular after 1200, during the Malla period. Especially noteworthy is the excellence of the Newari artists in grafting multiple arms to their figures with both anatomical conviction and aesthetic grace.

Nowhere is the dexterity and imaginative flair of the Newari sculptor more apparent than in the extraordinary richness of a twelfth-century bronze depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha (S23). The theme was also popular in India and Burma, but neither country has produced a comparable sculpture that is such an achievement in metal casting and harmonious complexity. While it is not uncommon to encounter elaborate compositions in stone—the Lichchhavi Uma-Mahesvara relief (S8) is a good example—such profusion of figures and vegetal motifs in a single bronze is extremely rare. The unknown artist has skillfully integrated the various vignettes in an animated yet reposeful composition. The smaller groups, each a well-separated tableau, are rare examples of narrative sculpture modeled in bronze. Despite the luxuriousness and elaboration of the flowering vines, the bronze retains its aesthetic coherence and remains a work of sheer artistic ingenuity.

The Early Malla Period (1200–1482)

More works have survived from the Malla and Shah periods than from the two earlier periods. Indeed, some of the finest wood carvings surviving in the country belong to the Early Malla period. The impressive figures of Amoghapasa Lokesvara (S34) and Chintamani Lokesvara (S36) exemplify the Newari craftsman's mastery of wood as a sculptural medium. Although the sculptor continued to demonstrate his ability with the chisel and hammer, by and large, the stone sculptures of the period are neither as attractive as those of the earlier periods nor as lively or appealing as contemporary figures in wood and bronze.

During the period Newari artists came to dominate the artistic scene in Tibet, and, in the thirteenth century, the master Nepali sculptor Aniko exerted considerable influence upon Buddhist art of China. The period further witnessed the proliferation of multilimbed tantric deities represented in various postures and activities. Some forms were employed in esoteric cults and, hence, were often represented in small bronzes and paintings, which could be easily hidden from public view. These tantric forms challenged the sculptor to further refine his skill in casting. Nepali tantrics, however, appear somewhat more restrained, especially in terms of bizarre imagery, than their Buddhist counterparts in Tibet. Nevertheless, the proliferation of tantric rituals offered the artists new concepts and forms that found expression in many outstanding bronzes.

In general, certain themes from the Lichchhavi period remained popular during the Malla and Shah periods. Among the most frequently represented subjects were Avalokitesvara, Tara, Uma, the Uma-Mahesvara theme, and Vishnu. These forms changed little from the established formula of the earlier periods. The several Avalokitesvara images (S25, S29, S37, S43) in the collection continue with relentless persistence the type formulated during the Lichchhavi period. Although differences among them may be observed in their proportions, facial features, and decorative details, neither in the iconography nor figural delineation can be discerned any artistic innovation. The same conservativism governs the creation of images of the Great Goddess, whether Tara, Uma, or Lakshmi, when shown in the simple, human form with two arms. In the Lichchhavi figure (S10), the goddess has a round, cherubic face with a soft expression, full breasts, and broad hips. The demure Tara (S26) of the Transitional period is a direct lineal descendant of the Lichchhavi goddess but with notable differences. In keeping with the greater linear tendency of the period, her hips are more attenuated, her face is less full, and the modeling of her form is richer and more naturalistic. The differences between a goddess of the Early Malla period (S39) and the ninth-century goddess are even more pronounced. Variations of proportions aside, the flexion of Vasudhara's body seems more contrived. The thrust of the hip is not as naturalistic, and the legs appear stiff and awkward. The upper body is now completely bare, and no shawl drapes the breasts and hangs gracefully down the left shoulder as in most earlier female figures. Instead, as with the Vishnu (S31) and Avalokitesvara figures (S25, S29), a sash encircles the thighs and hangs down the right leg. Another noteworthy element that differentiates bronzes of the earlier periods from those created after 1200 is the greater elaboration of the jewelry and application of inlaying. Lichchhavi figures display little inlaying or encrustration.[10] Inlaying seems to have been introduced during the Transitional period but was used sparingly. During the Early Malla period, however, Newari artists, perhaps influenced by their Tibetan patrons, began to encrust the figures with sumptuous ornaments.

The Early Malla period witnessed the growth of a national consciousness in Nepal. It was a remarkable era marked by the creation of a distinctive Nepali style of architecture. In sculpture as well the works of the Malla period reflect a distinctly Nepali artistic consciousness. This is most readily perceptible in the heads of the figures, which begin to assume more Mongoloid features with round faces, narrow eyes, and slight, pugnacious noses. Overall the figures of the Early Malla period have a soft and gentle expression, especially in the slightly smiling faces, and exude a refined sensuousness that makes them particularly appealing.

Several outstanding Early Malla bronzes in the collection clearly demonstrate both the thematic richness and artistic vitality of the tradition. The impressive *mukhalinga* (S30) is a fine example of the combination of casting and repoussé as well as excellent chasing and inlaying. For complexity of casting and elegance of design, the gilt bronze representing Vasudhara (S24) is particularly handsome. One of the most outstanding works is certainly the extraordinary figure of the goddess Chamunda (S32). To my knowledge, this is a unique sculpture and among the most powerful and imaginative representations of the goddess. Indeed, for the expressiveness of the figure and boldness of the composition, no comparable bronze representation of Chamunda has been found in the Indian subcontinent. Although the identity of the sculptor is unknown, his mastery of technique and form is incontestable.

The Late Malla (1482–1769) and Shah (since 1769) Periods

Sculptures from these two periods in the collection represent the principal media in which the Newari craftsman worked. In addition to stone, wood, and metal sculptures, the museum possesses several rare works in ivory and terra-cotta.

Although elephants are plentiful in the jungles of Nepal, ivory was not extensively used by Nepali artists. The two ivory objects in the collection are a comb (S54) and a piece of furnishing, perhaps belonging to a divine throne (S61). The history of ivory combs is very old in the Indian subcontinent, and it is possible that they were also familiar in ancient Nepal. This ivory comb is the only example to have survived from Nepal. Both ivories are finely carved and reflect the Newari craftsman's facility with this delicate medium.

Of the two terra-cotta sculptures, one represents the head of Bhairava (S60) and the other a *mahasiddha* (S48). Both examples demonstrate that, as with ivory, Newari artists were skillful and imaginative. Although terra-cotta is frequently used in architecture and sculpture, few terra-cotta sculptures from Nepal have found their way into Western collections. Of the two Late Malla-period terra-cottas, by far the more interesting is the portrait of a *mahasiddha* (great perfected being; a class of deified teachers and mystics venerated especially by Tibetan Buddhists). Both conceptually and stylistically, the relief exhibits the strong influence of Tibet, where the *mahasiddha* was a popular subject.

Although there are only two wood sculptures from this period in the collection, both are interesting. The large lunette tympanum (S57) is a typical decorative embellishment frequently used in Nepali architecture. The iconographically rich example represents the dancing Bhairava as the central figure. The other sculpture (S58) represents Bhairava in a more conventional form. The shrine itself is a representative example of a type of open-air sanctuary commonly seen in various towns.

Surviving stone temples built in the valley during the Late Malla and Shah periods are not as richly embellished with sculpture as are their Indian counterparts. Most Nepali stone sculptures are rather small in scale and were carved as stele images for wayside shrines, wall niches, and the many wonderful watering places that are part of the valley's indelible charm. While bronzes are frequently modeled in the round, stone sculptures are usually deeply carved as reliefs. The subjects represented in the collection are the Buddhist deity Samvara (S46), the dancing Siva (S49), the Uma-Mahesvara theme (S51, S62), and Durga destroying the buffalo demon (S63–64). Samvara's form and iconography follow the well-established formula encountered in earlier painted examples (P13, P19). Significantly, he is shown alone and not in physical union with his spouse. Rarely in stone images are Buddhist deities portrayed in sexual embrace; such images were meant to be viewed only by the initiated. The Uma-Mahesvara and Durga sculptures demonstrate the continued popularity of these themes during the period. Although aesthetically none of these sculptures matches the elegance of the earlier relief (see S8), they do illustrate the ability of the individual artist to express within a strongly conservative tradition certain artistic

preferences. The smallest of the stone sculptures in the collection is the seventeenth-century dancing Siva (S49). Not only is it a particularly animated figure carved with great delicacy, but it represents one of the few iconographic types borrowed by Nepalis from eastern India.

Among the bronzes of the period, the most difficult to place chronologically is a charming Garuda modeled in the round (S40). This type of kneeling, youthful figure is characteristic of Nepali sculptural representations of Garuda dating to the Lichchhavi period. This example, however, also relates to several dated examples of the Late Malla period, hence its inclusion in this group, although it may well be from the Early Malla period. A sixteenth-century bronze representation of Indra (S42) wearing a distinctive crown and seated in majesty and grace is characteristically Nepali and to my knowledge has no exact Indian prototype. The type may have been created during the Transitional period, but most surviving examples are later. Bronze and wood images of the god are still carried in procession during the annual Indra festival.

Most Late Malla- and Shah-period bronzes represent familiar gods and goddesses. Avalokitesvara, Tara, the Uma-Mahesvara theme, and Vishnu continue to be depicted with few iconographic innovations. Stylistically, however, they exhibit some variation. The posture of the figure becomes increasingly awkward, the modeling much flatter—especially in representations of the female form where the breasts are hardly discernible—and the garments and accessories are executed with less care and imagination. In some figures, Tibetan influences can be discerned in decorative details, such as the fascination with flying scarves (S55, S68), but unlike painting no new ideas were introduced into sculpture. Nevertheless, the Nepali sculptural tradition has remained vital and creative for more than a millennium, and even though it began to decline by the Late Malla period, talented artists continued to produce beautiful bronzes. Certainly the technical dexterity of the Newari craftsman remained undiminished as testified by the impressive bronzes in the collection (S39–40, S42, S56). Although the collection contains only one example of gold jewelry (S69), its excellent quality is eloquent testimony to the Newari craftsman's skill and aesthetic sensibility.

Notes

1. Quoted in Macdonald and Stahl 1979, p. 33. Abbé Huc was a European missionary who published an account of his travels through Nepal, Tibet, and China in 1846.
2. For instance, the New History of the Tang Dynasty states: "In the middle of the palace there is a tower of seven storeys roofed with copper tiles. Its balustrades, grilles, columns, beams, and everything therein are set with fine and even precious stones. . . . In the four pavilions there are sculptures to make you marvel" (quoted in Pal 1974, p. 7).
3. The earliest example of dated metalwork is in the Changu Narayan temple (Slusser 1976).
4. For a discussion of metal casting in Nepal, see Saraswati 1936 and de Labriffe 1973.
5. Pal 1974, p. 25.
6. Slusser 1982, 1: 175.
7. Third–fourth-century sculptures in the valley relate to Indian sculptures of the Kushan period (see Bangdel 1982).
8. Pal 1974.
9. Slusser 1982, 2: p. 470.
10. In the history of the Chinese Tang dynasty (see n. 2) can be found evidence for the use of inlaying during the Lichchhavi period (Macdonald and Stahl 1979, p. 19). To my knowledge, however, not a single bronze attributed with reasonable certainty to the Lichchhavi period is encrusted with stones or inlaid with silver.

Catalogue



S1 The God Vishnu on Garuda (Garudasanamurti)
Seventh century
Argillite; 12 in (30.5 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.73.4.10
Literature: Rosenfield et al. 1966, p. 41, no. 28; Pal 1974a, fig. 108.

The Hindu god Vishnu is seated on the back of his mount, Garuda, whose hands support his master's feet. Vishnu wears a dhoti, sacred thread (*upavita*), and sash around his waist. His adornments include a crown decorated with vegetal designs, square ear-ornaments (*kundala*), necklace, armlets in the form of serpents, and beaded bracelets. His upper right hand grasps the wheel (*chakra*), and corresponding left hand holds the club (*gada*). In the lower right hand is a boss symbolizing the fruit of knowledge, and in the lower left hand is the conch (*sankha*). A plain circular halo sets off Vishnu's head. The half-human, half-avian Garuda wears ear-ornaments like those of his divine lord. His necklace is a snake, for Garuda is an inveterate enemy of the serpent. His hair is arranged in small curls as is frequently seen in Buddha images. His outspread wings form a couch for his divine passenger, while his tail feathers constitute an aureole around the god.

This type of Vishnu image, probably borrowed from Gupta India, has remained extremely popular in Nepal. The prototype within the country was the image installed in the temple of Changu Narayan, the oldest and most venerated Vaishnava shrine in the valley. A fifth-century inscription of King Manadeva I on a pillar in the temple courtyard bears a beautiful Sanskrit invocation describing Vishnu's constant roaming of the universe to protect his devotees. Although there are many lithic representations of this subject in Nepal (see Pal 1974a, figs. 75–78), this is the only example in which Garuda supports the feet of Vishnu, as is prescribed in the *Vishnudharmottara-purana*, a fourth–seventh-century text. The manner of indicating the garment with closely placed double lines occurs in at least two fifth-century sculptures (Pal 1974a, figs. 1, 11) and continued to be employed in later figures. Vishnu's crown has a distinctive shape and decoration. Instead of the face

of glory, the crown is decorated with vegetal motifs reminiscent of the seventh-century Aphsad Vishnu (Asher 1980, pl. 88). The plain circular halo is also consistent with an early date.

As is usual in such images, the composition is frontal, greatly enlivened by the outstretched wings and tail feathers of Garuda. In most examples, the tail feathers are represented with greater exuberance, but here they are simple and elegant leaflike shapes that do not detract from Vishnu's abstracted form. Noteworthy also is the sculptor's portrayal of Garuda as a perennial youth with cherubic face and curly hair.

S2 *Male Figure*



S2 Male Figure
Dhumvarahi; seventh–eighth century
Terra-cotta with pigment; 4 in (10.2 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slusser; M.74.43.3
Literature: Slusser 1982, 2: fig. 441.

Both the head and feet of this small terra-cotta are missing. The figure wears a torque, armlets, bracelets, and across the torso the beaded string representing the sacred thread. A sash appears to be tied in a bow below the subject's stomach. The figure may have worn knee-high boots. The widespread position of the long legs indicate that he once rode an animal, perhaps a horse. The hands may have held the reins. It is not possible to identify the subject more precisely, nor can it be determined whether the figure served a sacred or secular function. Slusser (1982) has published another fragmentary figure in which the mitered head is fully preserved; the museum's headless figure was probably similarly crowned.

Both figures, and the three following objects (S2–4), were recovered from a Lichchhavi midden at Dhumvarahi near Kathmandu. All may have been manufactured in the same workshop as they are made from the same mica-enriched clay and are painted with red pigment. Except for the unusually long legs, the style of this figure conforms to that of Lichchhavi stone sculptures.

S3 *Reclining Bull*



S3 Reclining Bull
Dhumvarahi; seventh–eighth century
Terra-cotta with pigment; 1 1/2 x 3 in (3.2 x 7.6 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slusser; M.74.43.2

Although the legs and horns are missing, most of the body and head of the bull are well preserved. The simple form is a naturalistic representation that fully expresses the animal's physical power. The hump and head with wide open eyes are prominently modeled, but the dewlap is rendered somewhat summarily. Nepali sculptors, especially of the Lichchhavi period, were particularly skillful in depicting the bull, which is the mount of the Hindu god Siva. The animal also occurs as a symbol on the coins and edicts of King Amsuvarman (r. 605–21). Indeed, both for its powerful modeling and elegant naturalism, this small terra-cotta is strikingly similar to contemporaneous representations of the bull on coins and stone edicts (Slusser 1982, 2: pl. 51).

S4 Makara *Spout*



S4 Makara *Spout*
Dhumvarahi; seventh–eighth century
Terra-cotta with pigment; 1 x 1 1/2 in (2.6 x 3.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slusser; M.74.43.1

A water spout in the form of a *makara* (a mythical aquatic creature) is a ubiquitous feature of Nepali architecture related to sources of water. An ancient auspicious symbol of fertility and abundance in Indian cultures, the *makara* is an especially appropriate decorative element on water spouts. Elaborate and handsome examples of such spouts in gilt metal are still in use today, disgorging water at most fountains, which are an indispensable part of the water architecture of the valley (Slusser 1982, 2: pls. 233–34). Such spouts were without doubt in use during the Lichchhavi period. Seventh-century Chinese visitors observed: "From the summit of the tower water is poured through funnels which finds its way down below, streaming like a fountain from the mouth of the golden Makara" (quoted in Pal 1974, p. 7).

The exact function of this tiny spout is not clear. It may have been made for ritual purposes and been attached to a small terra-cotta shrine, perhaps of the god Bhairava, as is a much later metal example (S59). More likely, the spout was part of a waterpot used by brahmins and monks.



S5 *Fragments of a Pot*
Dhumvarahi; seventh–eighth century
Terra-cotta with pigment; 2 x 5 in (5.1 x 12.7 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slusser; M.74.43.4

Three fragments of what must have been a pot or deep dish have survived (the largest piece is illustrated here). The pot had a high foot and plain body and was covered with the red slip used in figurines from the same group (S2–4). As in the other examples, mica flecks adhere to the surface. The other two fragments, which are very small, probably were part of the vessel's molded ring. The outside of one fragment is stamped with a stylized lotus design.

S6 *The Bodhisattva Vajrapani* or *the God Indra* *Color plate, p. 43*



S6 *The Bodhisattva Vajrapani* or *the God Indra*
Eighth century
Copper with traces of gilt; 5 3/8 in (13.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.14
Literature: Kramrisch 1964, fig. 7, pp. 60, 129; Pal 1966, p. 78, fig. 77; Pal 1974a, fig. 202; Pal 1974b, fig. 76; von Schroeder 1981, pp. 306–7, fig. 75D.

An elegantly mitered and majestic figure with dwarf attendant stands gracefully on a rectangular metal base. A nimbus simulating the shape of a miter is attached to the principal figure's head. His ornaments include a pearl necklace with a central sapphire, two oval earrings, and a pair of bracelets. Parts of a fillet securing the miter to the head spread out fanlike behind his ears. He wears a short dhoti held together at the waist with a clasped belt. A sash encircles his hips and thighs diagonally and hangs elegantly down his right leg. His right hand holds a round object, his left hand grasps the prong of the thunderbolt emerging from the head of the dwarf, who stands with his hands crossed against his chest.

When first published (Kramrisch 1964), the nimbated figure was identified simply as a bodhisattva. Subsequently, a more specific identification with the bodhisattva Vajrapani was suggested, based primarily on the fact that the attendant figure is Vajrapurusha, the personification of Vajrapani's attribute, the thunderbolt. In at least two other Lichchhavi sculptures (Pal 1974a, fig. 14; Pal 1977, pp. 160–61), the prongs of a thunderbolt emerge from the dwarf's head. The principal male in a third sculpture of about the eleventh century (Pal 1974a, fig. 247) has a horizontal third eye, the distinctive attribute of the god Indra (see S42). In this group, too, the thunderbolt, which is also Indra's attribute, is personified as a dwarf. Indra does not wear the miter, one of his distinctive attributes. The principal figure in the museum's bronze possesses two of Indra's characteristics but lacks the third eye. The horizontal third eye may have originally been incised on the forehead but has since been rubbed away. Although the miter is not commonly worn by Vajrapani, at least one Lichchhavi representation wears a miterlike crown (Pal 1974a, fig. 204). Thus, while an exact identification of the museum's figure cannot be made, it is more than likely that he represents Vajrapani.

The gesture formed by the arms of the dwarf attendant is noteworthy. Kramrisch (1964) suggests that the gesture signifies submission or humility and is known as *vinayahasta*. A source for this nomenclature, however, has not been located, and the gesture is not included in the collection's two sketchbooks illustrating gestures (D3 and D27). Nevertheless, the gesture is familiar in the repertoire of classical Indian dance, and according to Kapila Vatsyayan, a noted authority on Indian dance, it is known as *saṃyuta hasta svastika* (crossed or joined auspicious arms). Significantly, however, in the Bharata Nāṭyam, one of the classical modes of dance in India, the gesture is often performed by Lakshmana, the devoted younger brother of Rama, hero of the Indian epic the *Ramayana*. Since Lakshmana was always submissive to Rama, Kramrisch's interpretation would not be entirely inappropriate.

Not only is this one of the earliest known bronzes from Nepal, it is also one of the finest. It is stylistically related to the bodhisattva Vajrapani carved on the well-known stone monument that stands in the Dvaka-bahal in Kathmandu and can be dated with some certainty to the seventh century (see Pal 1974a, fig. 14). Both figures in this bronze are handsomely proportioned and smoothly modeled, with clear and fluent outlines and a simple elegance strongly reminiscent of the clasic Gupta style. The practice of personifying the attribute, in this case the thunderbolt, was also popular with Indian artists of the Gupta period. Both figures are modeled fully in the round, although the details are more thoroughly articulated in the front.



S7 A Meditating Buddha
C. 800
Bronze with gilt; 4 9/16 in (11.6 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.16
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 78, fig. 79; Pal 1974a, p. 32, fig. 26; Pal 1974b, p. 25, fig. 55.

On a plain oval base, a Buddha is seated in meditation in a classic yogic posture known commonly as the lotus position. He is clad in the three robes typical of Buddhist monks, and his empty hands rest on one another in his lap. His eyes are half shut, and his head is covered with the short curls typical of a Buddha. The cranial bump signifying transcendental wisdom and elongated earlobes are characteristic signs of a Buddha. An open, flaming halo symbolizing knowledge further announces his divine nature. Along the base is incised in very clear lettering the Buddhist creed, beginning with the expression *ye dharma*. The figure may represent the historical Buddha Sakyamuni or the transcendental Buddha Amitabha.

The paleography and style of this small but handsome gilt bronze indicate that it cannot be dated later than the ninth century (see Pal 1974a, p. 32). The paleography is consistent with known and dated Nepali inscriptions of the eighth–ninth century (cf. Vajracharya 1973, p. 130, for an inscription dated A.D. 818), while the style compares favorably with other contemporary Buddha images in Nepal and the neighboring Indian state of Bihar. Lichchhavi Buddha images were directly inspired by Gupta Buddhas from Sarnath. This eighth-century Nepali bronze echoes the serene elegance, introspective expression, and taut but smooth modeling characteristic of Gupta Buddhas.



S8 The Holy Family of Siva (Uma-Mahesvara)
Ninth century
Stone; 10 7/8 in (27.6 cm)
Gift of the Ahmanson Foundation; M.81.23

In the middle of the relief, the Hindu god Siva and his spouse, Uma, are seated on a thick cushion or mattress placed on an elephant skin. Siva sits in the posture of grace (*lalitasana*) with his right leg pendant, Uma reclines languidly with her right arm resting on her husband's thigh. Siva holds the rosary in his upper right hand and the trident in his corresponding left hand. His second right hand displays the gesture of reassurance (*abhayamudra*), and his second left hand rests on his wife's shoulder. Beside Siva is his mount, the bull Nandi, and his son Kumara who holds the spear with his left hand and the peacock with his right hand. Next to Uma stands her four-armed companion, whose attributes are not clearly recognizable. Siva's attendants—each with four arms and holding, among other objects, the trident—stand above on either side, as if they are keeping watch from rocky balconies. Immediately above Siva's head is the river goddess Ganga who appears to be descending into Siva's matted locks. Above Uma's head is a flying angel. At the top of the relief is a parasol, symbol of sovereignty. A band of stylized rock formations separates the upper section from the frieze below which Siva's host (*gana*) are performing for their divine lord and lady.

This theme is known as Uma-Mahesvara (Mahesvara being an epithet of Siva). The subject generally serves a didactic purpose in Indian temples, and its representation is usually placed in a niche on the external wall of a temple. In Nepal such reliefs are worshiped in a little shrine. The effaced condition of this relief may have been caused as much by the elements as by the constant application of ritual unguents.

This finely sculpted relief depicts the most popular Saiva theme in Nepali sculpture. Like the Garudasanamurti (S1), it was endlessly copied in interesting variations. Although the concept derived from India, Nepali sculptors not only developed their own compositional formula but infused their representations with human warmth. The inclusion of Ganga and attendants is one such Nepali characteristic. Another is the emphasis placed on Siva's habitat, the Kailas mountain range, indicated by the stylized rock formations. Despite the multiple arms and other divine attributes, the theme is essentially human, for Siva, Uma, and the boy Kumara are watching a dance performed by Ganesa (another member of the holy family), the skeletal Bhringi, the adopted son Virabhadra, and the two animal-headed dwarfs, who also provide musical accompaniment. The display of intimacy between Siva and Uma is expressed gracefully by the wife's posture. This posture, as well as the general narrative intent of the composition, is reminiscent of the monumental reliefs at Ellora in the Deccan.

S9 *The God Kumara*



S9 The God Kumara
Ninth century
Copper alloy; 2 1/2 x 2 in (6.3 x 5.1 cm)
Gift of Andrew Rogers; M.84.40

This charming little bronze represents Kumara, also known as Skanda or Karttikeya. The son of Siva and Uma, Skanda is regarded in Hindu mythology as the god of war or the divine general. In Nepal he is shown by himself in individual images and is frequently depicted in Uma-Mahesvara reliefs (S8) and bronzes. In such representations he is often shown as a playful boy, as in this figure, which must once have been attached to a bronze Uma-Mahesvara group.

The slightly plump and childish figure with his hair tied in a topknot is seated with his left leg folded and his right leg stretched in front. He wears a short dhoti, various ornaments, and sacred thread. Leggings are indicated by incisions on his right leg only. His right hand is raised above his head as if he were dancing. His left hand very likely held the spear, one of his attributes; the arm may have once encircled the neck of his favorite, the peacock. In Nepali reliefs Skanda is often shown playing with his peacock (see S8). In Indian sculptures he is occasionally shown with his left arm around the neck of his pet bird.

Although small, the figure is naturalistically modeled both in the front and back. The seated posture and disposition of the arms make the figure both lively and unusual. Although the facial features are considerably effaced, the large eyes and cherubic expression relate the figure to other Lichchhavi sculptures in the collection, such as the Garuda in S1 and the Vajrapurusha in S6.

S10 *A Goddess, Probably Parvati*

S10 A Goddess, Probably Parvati
Ninth century
Copper alloy; 4 in (10.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.53.4

Wearing a sari and diaphanous shawl, the goddess stands frontally with her pelvis thrust forward. Her ornaments consist of a single-crested tiara, two different ear-adornments, necklace, armlets, and bracelets. Part of a flame halo is attached to her neck. A bird or animal is perched on her left hand, which rests against her thigh. Her right hand, outstretched in the gesture of charity, holds the boss. Her feet are missing, but originally she would have stood on a lotus.



This figurative form, either standing frontally or with a pronounced graceful sway, was repeatedly used by Nepali sculptors throughout history to represent the Hindu goddesses Uma and Lakshmi or the Buddhist goddess Tara. The presence of the bird or animal on her left hand identifies the goddess as Uma. It is difficult to determine whether the creature is a parrot or an iguana (*godha*). A parrot, symbolizing fertility, is often placed on one wrist of the Hindu goddess, while the iguana is added to the pedestal. Thus, very likely the creature is a parrot and the goddess a form of Uma.

Whatever her exact identification, there can be little doubt that this is a Lichchhavi bronze. Stylistically, the figure relates closely to several images of the period (Pal 1974a, figs. 85, 216–18) as well as to the reclining Uma in the Uma-Mahesvara relief in the collection (S8). The soft gentle expression of the face, high breasts, pinched waist, and broad hips are typical characteristics of the female form in Lichchhavi sculptures. Other features indicating an early date are the elegant fall of the upper garment over the left arm, representation of the sari's material by lightly incised geometrical designs (more visible in back), and rather thin casting that has resulted in a flattened back.

A peculiar tubelike ornament is worn by the goddess on her left ear. It occurs on several other figures in Nepal (Pal 1974a, figs. 159, 179, 227) and also on at least two eighth-century images from Bihar (Asher 1980, pls. 186, 191). The exact significance of the ear-ornament is not known, but very likely it reproduces a type of jewelry fashionable at the time and may have had a tribal origin. Significantly, in the brief account of Nepal preserved in the history of the Tang dynasty, it is reported that the people of Nepal "pierce their ears and suspend therein tubes made of bamboo or horn of cattle" (quoted in Jayaswal 1936, p. 238).



S11 A Dwarf Attendant
Tenth century
Wood with traces of pigment; 16 1/2 in (41.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.73.4.1
Literature: Rosenfield et al. 1966, pp. 24–25, fig. 4.

An ornamented naked dwarf with an overhanging belly stands on a modern base. His feet are modern restorations. Most of the original paint has peeled off, and the wood has split prominently on the right side of the body. His hair, arranged in hook-shaped curls cascades down his shoulders. The right arm with closed fist is stretched upright, as if the figure were holding onto an adult. The exact identification of the figure is difficult to determine, but very likely he represents an attendant figure like the Vajrapurusha (S6).

When this sculpture was first published (Rosenfield et al. 1966), it was attributed to India and compared with a *gana* figure from Pithalkhora of the first to second century B.C. Stylistic considerations indicate a much earlier date than here suggested, which is based primarily on carbon 14 tests of the material. Some stylistic correspondences, however, may be seen in Nepali sculptures of the Lichchhavi and Transitional periods. The cherubic head with large open eyes and curly locks is often seen in Lichchhavi figures, especially of *ganas* and *garudas*. A figure representing the boy Kumara stretches out his left arm in a manner similar to that in an Uma-Mahesvara relief, which was probably not carved later than the tenth century (Pal 1974a, fig. 134).



S12 Mahasri Tara and Companions
Tenth century
Copper with gilt, pigment, and semiprecious stones; 8 1/4 in (21 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.79.9.4
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 80, fig. 82; Pal 1975, pp. 54, 81, fig. 39.

The central figure in this triad is the Buddhist goddess Mahasri Tara (savioress of great beauty; one of the several manifestations of Tara). On her right is Asokakanta, and on her left is Ekajata. Mahasri Tara sits gracefully in the *lalitasana* position on a blooming lotus. Bedecked in jewelry, her hands form the turning of the wheel of the law gesture. Ekajata's right hand is engaged in saluting Mahasri Tara; the object in her left hand is unrecognizable. Asokakanta holds the thunderbolt against her chest and the vase. Although both companions are included in iconographic texts, there are certain discrepancies between the textual descriptions and this representation. Ekajata is not quite the ferocious goddess of the text and does not hold the chopper and skull-cup. Her hair, however, is arranged in a single (*eka*) matted bouffant (*jata*) and her broad face is certainly less pleasing than her companions'. It seems that in Nepal not only was the fierce aspect of the goddess downplayed, but it was not uncommon to portray her making the gesture of adoration (Pal 1975, p. 37, fig. 18). The text states that Asokakanta should hold the thunderbolt and *asoka* flower; in this representation a vase replaces the flower. Such discrepancies indicate that the artist followed other textual traditions than those known today (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, pp. 227–28).

This particular form of the goddess Tara appears to have been more popular in Nepal than in India. It is not only one of the earliest representations of the goddess in Nepal but also one of the finest. To create a harmonious composition, the sculptor has skillfully contrasted the simplicity and elegance of the figures with the vegetative abundance of the lush foliage, admirably complementing the pliancy of each form and enhancing the rhythmic vitality of the composition.

S13 The God Vishnu
Dated 983
Copper alloy with gilt; 18 5/8 (47.3 cm)
Gift of the Ahmanson Foundation; M.80.18.7

This repoussé plaque once served as a sheath for a stone or wood image of Vishnu. An inscription written on the aureole along the arms of the god (see detail) states that it was dedicated in the year 983 by Jiva of the Vaidya family (see Appendix). Apart from an inscribed sheath covering the principal image in the Changu Narayan temple (see Slusser 1976), this is to date not only the earliest repoussé plaque from Nepal but one of the earliest dated bronzes from that country.

Standing on a base adorned in front with exuberant plant motifs, the figure of Vishnu occupies much of the plaque. Elaborately ornamented, the god wears a dhoti, belt, sash that forms a wide loop across his thighs, sacred thread, and anklets. His crowned head is set off by an oval nimbus with pearl and flame borders. His upper right hand holds the mace and upper left hand, the flaming wheel. The boss is attached to the lower right hand outstretched in the gesture of charity, while the lower left hand grasps the conch. Below the right hand is the open lotus; below the left hand is the closed flower.

The elaborate aureole is embellished in succeeding rows (moving away from the figure) with lotus petals, meandering vine, pearls with florettes, and finally, large comma-shaped flowers.

One of the most noteworthy iconographic features of the composition is the abundance of foliage and vegetative motifs, emphasizing the god's association with water cosmology. Among other unusual elements are the

S13 detail



placement of the wheel in the upper left hand and the manner in which it is held. Generally, in most Vishnu images, the god holds the wheel with his upper right hand as in S1, although in P26, he is shown holding the wheel with the upper left hand. Usually the wheel is represented frontally and not laterally as in this example. It was not uncommon, however, in Lichchhavi reliefs to depict the wheel in this manner (Slusser 1982, 2: pl. 52). Perhaps the most intriguing feature of this Vishnu is the delineation of an erect penis below the dhoti. To my knowledge this is not encountered in any other Vishnu image, whether in Nepal or India. In Nepal such idiosyncracies are not entirely surprising. Moreover, as a yogi, it would not be altogether inappropriate for Vishnu to be ithyphallic, symbolizing one who has complete control of his sexual passions.

Unlike the many stone reliefs in situ in the Kathmandu Valley, this plaque is particularly striking because of its ornateness. Even the figure of Vishnu is more sumptuously adorned than is usual. Nevertheless, that the sculptor was a fine craftsman is evident from the crisp and articulate delineation of the various decorative and symbolic motifs that enrich this handsome plaque.

S14 *The Siddhaikavira Manjusri*



S14 The Siddhaikavira Manjusri
Tenth century
Copper alloy with traces of gilt and pigment; 5 1/2 in (14 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener; M.72.108.6

In this particular manifestation, the bodhisattva Manjusri is known as Siddhaikavira, which is also the name of a tantric text. The expression *siddha* means "perfection" and *ekavira*, "unflinching hero." The epithet is, therefore, especially appropriate for Manjusri, the bodhisattva of wisdom and enlightenment.

The bodhisattva is represented as a plump young boy who stands gracefully on a lotus atop a rectangular base and is surrounded by an oval aureole. He wears a dhoti, sash, and sacred thread. His ornaments include bangles and anklets, an elaborate necklace with three tassels, serpent armlets, and two ear-bells. His hair is gathered in two bunches behind his ears, and he wears a tiara on his head.

His right hand outstretched in the gesture of charity, holds the boss, while his left hand lightly grasps the sinuous stem of the blue lotus. This gesture and particular flower are two attributes of Siddhaikavira Manjusri.

What is most distinct about such Nepali representations of Manjusri is his depiction as a young boy. This is in keeping with the textual characterization of Manjusri as *kumara*. Although this word is also used to denote a prince, its primary meaning is "child" or "boy." In Indian society boyhood is considered to end at age sixteen, and in some descriptions Manjusri is specifically described as a sixteen-year-old youth (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 114).

The plump body of the bodhisattva, with suitably articulated belly and pectoral muscles, exudes a sense of well-being and nourishment. His hairstyle and ornaments, especially necklace and anklets, further emphasize his childhood. In addition, he is given two bells as ear-ornaments, a feature seen in Nepali images of Kumara, the son of Siva and Uma. The conceptual identity of the young (*kumara*) Manjusri and Kumara is well known, and Nepali sculptors emphasized this relation further by portraying both as young boys. In ancient Nepal children may have worn bells as ear-ornaments to protect them from evil. This small figure modeled in the round is a fine example of the Lichchhavi style and may well have been created in the tenth century.



S15 Androgynous Form of Siva and Uma (Ardhanarisvara)
C. 1000
Copper alloy with semiprecious stones; 33 in (83.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.82.6.1
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 83; Pal 1974a, pp. 99–100, fig. 150; Pal 1975, pp. 89, 127; von Schroeder 1981, pp. 328–29, fig. 86F.

The androgynous image of Siva and Uma was devised by theologians essentially to emphasize the nonduality of the divine principle. Perhaps the most lucid explanation of such images was offered by the fifth-century Sanskrit poet Kalidasa when he wrote that Siva and Uma cannot be separated from each other just as a word cannot be separated from its meaning. The fact that in a male-dominated civilization such images could be conceived demonstrates the tremendous importance of the feminine principle in Hindu theogony.

As is customary in such images, the right half of the figure represents Siva and the left, Uma. Not only are the two halves clearly distinguished by physical features, such as the wider arc of Uma's hip and prominent female breast, but also by the hairstyles, ornaments, and garments. For instance, Uma's garment decorously falls to her ankle, but Siva's stops at the knee, as is customary with male figures; Uma's hair is arranged in a beautiful doughnut-shaped bouffant, while Siva's is gathered in a crown of matted hair. Uma wears a more elaborate tiara and is more bejeweled than is Siva. Only two attributes can be recognized with any certainty. In her lower left hand Uma holds the small waterpot; the object in the other hand may be the handle of the mirror or stem of the lotus. Siva's upper hand holds the trident, which curiously points downward; his other arm is broken from the elbow.

Not only is this the earliest sculpture of an Ardhanarisvara to have survived from Nepal, but it is also one of the largest and most beautiful bronzes known. With half-shut eyes, the face echoes the form and grace of the classic Indian style of the Gupta period. In contrast to the simple elegance of the body with its crisp but subtly articulated outline, the jewelries and coiffures are intricately carved and chased. The long and slender arms, linear contour, and smooth modeling seem to have been characteristic of most sculptures of the tenth–eleventh century. The additional sash around the waist is tied in an identical manner in a seventh-century Buddha and ninth–tenth-century bronze Indra (Pal 1974a, figs. 15–16, 247). It is, therefore, unlikely that this bronze was cast later than the late tenth or early eleventh century.





S16 Personified Thunderbolt (Vajrapurusha)
C. 1000
Copper alloy with traces of gilt; 5 1/4 in (13.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Kahn; M.74.105.2
Literature: Pal 1975, pp. 42–43, 76–77; von Schroeder 1981, pp. 320–21, fig. 82H.

The dwarfish male with a menacing expression stands gracefully on a large lotus base. He wears around his stomach a short dhoti and sash, the two ends of which hang down on either side of his body. An animal skin, perhaps that of a leopard, is draped around his thighs, and a snake is wound like a belt around his hips. Additional snakes serve as various ornaments. His cape spreads out behind him like wings, and his hair is tied in a bun with yet another snake. His arms cross against his chest in the gesture of humility (see S6), and from the bun on his head emerges the prongs of the *vajra*.

That he is a Vajrapurusha or the personified thunderbolt seems clear from a comparison with the earlier figure in the collection (S6) and with other early Lichchhavi sculptures (Pal 1974a, fig. 14). What is notably different about this Vajrapurusha is his forbidding appearance. In no other Nepali Vajrapurusha is the face given so terrifying an expression with such articulately rendered beard, glaring eyes, and frowning eyebrows. The stylish treatment of the cape and profusion of snakes are also peculiar to this figure and considerably enhance his awesome character.

Generally such personified attributes are attached to the figure of the principal deity and share the same pedestal (see S6). In this instance, however, Vajrapurusha himself appears to be the sole object of veneration as in two other examples. One is a larger bronze in the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena (von Schroeder 1981, p. 312, no. 78A). The other example is a five-foot sculpture still in worship in a temple in Patan (Slusser 1982, 2: figs. 469–70). It would seem, therefore, that some sort of a cult of Vajrapurusha, like that of Vishnu's attribute, the wheel, was prevalent in Nepal during the later Lichchhavi period.

The museum's bronze is stylistically related to the Norton Simon example for which a ninth-century date has been suggested. Both seem, however, much closer to the *garuda* in a Vishnu plaque dated 1004 (Pal 1975, p. 109, no. 79). The stone sculpture in Patan, which may have been the model for both bronzes, was very likely carved in the tenth century.

S17 *The Goddess Durga*



S17 *The Goddess Durga*
Dated 1090
Copper alloy with gilt; 9 1/2 in (24.1 cm)
Gift of Ed and Doris Wiener; M.84.124.1

Like the earlier Vishnu plaque (S13), this example was once used as a sheath for an image in another medium. The etched inscription on either side of the head and along the left leg states that the plaque was dedicated in the year N.S. 310, corresponding to A.D. 1090. The name of the donor is not legible.

The goddess stands in a militant posture with her right leg on the buffalo's head and her left foot on the ground. Her garment is represented by the symmetrical folds between her legs and an etched design. A lightly delineated scarf drapes her shoulders and forearms. She is ornamented with a necklace, earrings, and a three-lobed tiara. Her lowermost left hand holds the tail of the buffalo. The other seven arms carry weapons (clockwise from the lowermost right hand): thunderbolt, arrow, sword, wheel, trident, bow, and shield. Her head is encircled with a nimbus incised with flame motifs that also, together with a bead pattern, adorn the border of the surrounding aureole.

Although the cult of Durga is very important in Nepal, no image has yet been found that may certainly be assigned to the Lichchhavi period. In fact, this repoussé plaque is the earliest datable representation of this form of the goddess. The somewhat effaced condition of the plaque, including the several holes on the nose, breasts, and waist was caused by the ritual application of unguents.

In most representations of the goddess made during the period in south or southeast Asia, Durga is seen engaging a demon who emerges from the decapitated buffalo. Here, however, not only is there no such combative demon, but the buffalo is presented as a tame animal seated placidly, not unlike Siva's mount, the bull. The absence of Durga's usual mount, the lion, makes the buffalo almost a

substitute mount. The buffalo does serve as a mount for some Buddhist divinities. The placement of Durga's right foot on the buffalo's head, however, emphasizes the animal's subdued position. Moreover, usually in such reliefs, the goddess is seen piercing either the buffalo or the demon with her trident or spear, but here no such action is portrayed.

The linear definition of Durga's form, her militant posture, and the skillful distribution of her arms enliven the composition. In addition, surface details—such as the designs of her garments, flame pattern, and incised rock formations—accentuate the sense of movement. Noteworthy also is the naturalistic posture and form of the buffalo, which add depth to the relief. No example of an Indian relief with a similar composition is known, and even in Nepal this representation is unique.

S18 *The Goddess Chunda*



S18 The Goddess Chunda
Eleventh century
Copper alloy; 3 7/8 x 4 1/4 in (9.5 x 10.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.53.3

The goddess is seated in the classic yogic posture on an oval base. Her eighteen arms spread out on either side to form a sort of aureole. The two principal arms display the gesture of turning the wheel of the law; her other arms hold various attributes (from top to left): conch, thunderbolt, wheel, or shield; others are too effaced to be identified. The goddess's hair is gathered in a single chignon and is adorned with a tiara. She wears the usual ornaments.

Chunda's cult was prominent in ancient Pattikera (part of present-day Bangladesh) and the Nalanda region of Bihar (van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1966). It has been suggested that she was a goddess of the lower classes, especially of prostitutes (Mallmann 1975, p. 143), but this is unlikely. She is certainly the presiding goddess of a dharani bearing the name Chunda. Although the word *chundi* means bawd, the root *chund* (associated with the root *bund*) means to perceive, learn, or understand. This would associate Chunda with wisdom or knowledge, which is what she represents here, as is clear from the gesture she displays with her principal hands. That she is a goddess associated with wisdom is also evident from the fact that in other descriptions, especially in the *Prajnaparamita* (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 223), she is said to carry the book. The bronze is stylistically related to several inscribed and dated eleventh-century examples (Pal 1971) and to other bronzes of the period (S17, S19).

S19 *The God Siva*

S19 The God Siva
Eleventh century
Copper alloy; 15 1/2 in (39.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.80.6.1
Literature: Pal 1966, pp. 74–75.

Wearing a dhoti and diaphanous shawl indicated by fine striations, Siva is seated in the graceful *lalitasana* posture. He wears the usual jewelries, and a tiara adorns his crown of matted hair, to which is attached the crescent moon and serpent. The serpent forms his right ear-ornament, and a plain ring embellishes his left ear. Both the serpent and crescent moon are important attributes of Siva, the former symbolizing his association with water and the latter, with vegetation, especially medicinal plants. Typical also of Siva is the third eye on his forehead, symbolizing fire; the two normal eyes represent the sun and moon. His upper right hand displays the gesture of teaching, and the corresponding left hand probably grasped the trident. The lower right hand is broken from the elbow; the lower left hand is cupped and empty.

Very likely this bronze Siva formed part of an Uma-Mahesvara group (see S8). This is especially evident from the wide sweep of the lower left hand, which may have embraced an image of Uma, his posture, and tilt of the head. To date, this is the largest seated Siva to be found in metal. Metal representations are usually made for domestic altars and are, therefore, small.

Solidly cast and well modeled, the sculpture presents a lively and rhythmic composition. The arms are gracefully disposed, and the long, delicate fingers form elegant gestures that enhance the plasticity of the figure. The tilt of the head, serene face, poised posture, and taut but clean outline make this a particularly attractive sculpture. In terms of its plastic qualities and salient details, such as the patterning of the garment and crisp delineation of the jewelry, the figure is closely related to the Maitreya of the same period (S20).





S20 *The Bodhisattva Maitreya*
Eleventh century
Copper alloy with traces of gilt and pigment;
17 1/2 in (44.4)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Klejman; M.70.18

This solidly cast bronze represents the future Buddha Maitreya in the guise of a bodhisattva. The epithet Maitreya literally means "friendly one," and Maitreya's appearance on earth is still awaited by pious Buddhists.

Maitreya is represented as a Buddha and as a bodhisattva. As a potential Buddha and before his appearance on earth, he lives in the Tushita heaven (one of several Buddhist heavens) as a bodhisattva. In this bronze the bodhisattva, adorned in appropriate garments and jewelry, stands gracefully on a fully opened lotus. His right hand forms the gesture of teaching while his left hand holds the small waterpot, the emblem of an ascetic brahmin. The texts predict that Maitreya will be born into a brahmin family. The stupa, usually delineated against his tiara, is absent. Thus, the identification of this figure with Maitreya is not absolutely certain, for other bodhisattvas also hold the waterpot.

This fully modeled sculpture must once have graced the altar of a Tibetan monastery, as is evident from the traces of gold paint adhering to the face and neck. Perhaps the entire figure was once painted. It was more common in Tibet than in Nepal to cover bronzes in gold paint, whether or not they were gilded. The bronze may have been cast in Tibet rather than in the Kathmandu Valley. If so, it must have been made by a Newari sculptor. The pattern on the garment, elegant disposition of the sash, and treatment of the lotus base are characteristic of Lichchhavi bodhisattva images. Stylistically, however, the bronze is similar to a bronze Siva in the collection (S19), which makes a Nepali origin most likely.



S21 The Goddess Vasudhara
Eleventh century
Copper alloy with gilt, semiprecious stones, and glass; 19 in (48.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.81.8.2
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 90; D. C. Bhattacharyya 1974, fig. 14; Pal 1975, pp. 57, 81; D. C. Bhattacharyya 1978, fig. 10; von Schroeder 1981, p. 344.

The Buddhist goddess of wealth and prosperity, Vasudhara, is seated gracefully in the *lalitasana* position with her right foot resting on a small lotus. Clad in a dhoti, she is elaborately bejeweled with ornaments inlaid with rubies and other stones. Her hair is stylishly arranged into two elegant buns on either side of an exquisitely rendered tiara. According to a religious text describing her ritual (Pal 1967c), her right hands should display the gesture of charity while holding a gem and the gesture of adoring the Buddha while holding a sheaf of grain. Her left hands should hold the auspicious waterpot, sheaf of grain, and *Prajnaparamita*. The image follows the textual description faithfully, and only the gem in her lowermost right hand is missing.

Four of Vasudhara's attributes—the gesture of charity, auspicious waterpot, gems, and grain—signify her role as dispenser of wealth and agent of fecundity. The book emphasizes her identity with the abstract concept of knowledge or wisdom. All Buddhist goddesses signify prajna, but the texts specifically state that in addition to her fertility aspect Vasudhara also dispenses knowledge (*vidyādāneśvareśvarī*) and is none other than Prajnaparamita herself (*prajñāpāramitā devī prajñaśrī buddhavarddhanī*).

This bronze has generally been dated to the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. The most likely date, however, seems to be the eleventh century, not only by comparison with dated bronzes (Pal 1975, p. 57, no. 41) but also with other eleventh-century sculptures in the collection. The soft but sensuous modeling, sharply defined facial features, ornamentation, and chasing are similar to elements seen in other tenth–eleventh-century sculptures. This is also the largest bronze Vasudhara known in Nepali art.

S22 The Bodhisattva Manjusri
Eleventh century
Copper alloy with rubies; 6 3/4 in (17.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.19
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 81, fig. 84; Glynn 1972, fig. 21; von Schroeder 1981, p. 348, fig. 90A.



The bodhisattva Manjusri is represented in his classic manifestation. The princely figure is elegantly seated on an ovoid cushion, his left leg folded and right leg outstretched with the foot resting on a lotus. His hands form the turning of the wheel of the law gesture, which is particularly appropriate for Manjusri, the bodhisattva whose primary purpose is to instruct and grant knowledge. In contrast to Siddhaikavira Manjusri (S14), the bodhisattva in this representation is not portrayed as an adolescent but as a graceful youth.

The bronze is stylistically related to the Vasudhara of about the same date (S21), but this representation is also strongly reminiscent of the figural forms of a much earlier period. The smooth elegance of the suavely modeled figure and serene facial expression with half-shut eyes and sensuous mouth are vestiges of the classical features depicted in art produced during the early Lichchhavi period in Nepal and the Gupta period in India. The designs of the garment and cushion are finely articulated, but neither the patterns nor the bodhisattva's inlaid jewelry detract from the essential simplicity and clarity of the form. The balance of form and style is expressed further by the graceful and measured gestures of the hands, which form the focal point of the composition both visually and symbolically.





Detail

S23 Scenes from the Life of the Buddha
Twelfth century
Copper alloy with traces of gilt; 10 1/2 in (26.7 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phillips; M.82.165.6

This elaborate sculpture represents various incidents from the life of Buddha Sakyamuni. As was customary in India, the events are depicted in an encapsulated and symbolic form. This unique Nepali version is, however, far more elaborate and lively than its Indian prototype.

Following the established norm of Indian reliefs, the central event depicted is Sakyamuni's enlightenment below the bodhi tree at Bodhgaya. This scene is symbolized by the leafy nimbus behind the figure's head, gesture of his right hand touching the lotus seat, and upright thunderbolt below the lotus seat. Two females flanking the thunderbolt may portray the daughters of Mara, Buddhist god of desire, who have come to tempt Sakyamuni just before his enlightenment. Sakyamuni is flanked by two bodhisattvas: on his right is Avalokitesvara and on his left is Vajrapani. Immediately above the tree behind his head are two celestial beings who approach him with offerings.

Nine other incidents from the Buddha's life are represented around the central tableau, each on a separate lotus. Beginning below Sakyamuni's left knee and proceeding counterclockwise, the scenes are the birth and first seven steps; descent of the Buddha at Sankisya after preaching to his mother in heaven; first sermon at Sarnath; offering to the Buddha of honey by a monkey; physical demise of the Buddha surrounded by his disciples; the Buddha preaching to a lady, perhaps his mother; great miracle of multiple Buddhas at Sravasti; taming of the mad elephant Nalagiri; and the occasion before his enlightenment when he became emaciated due to harsh austerities.

The eight conventional miracles are represented in greater detail than is usually encountered in Indian reliefs from Bihar. Furthermore, the Nepali artist has added two incidents seldom represented in Indian Buddhist art. The depiction of the emaciated Buddha (see detail) was a popular subject with the sculptors of Gandhara in the early centuries of the Christian era, but both Indian and Nepali artists generally avoided it. According to the twelfth-century Tibetan pilgrim Dharmasvamin (Roerich 1959, p. 81), a temple at Bodhagaya contained an image of the emaciated Buddha, and thus, the inclusion of the theme in this Nepali bronze is not surprising. The other unusual representation may be identified as the sermon of the Buddha to his mother in her heavenly abode. Not only is the Buddha preaching to a solitary female but the incident is placed immediately above the Sravasti miracle. According to textual tradition, the Buddha ascended to heaven immediately after performing the multiple miracles at Sravasti. Both miracles are frequently shown together in the art of Thailand.

The various events represented in this bronze do not follow any chronological order but were arranged according to the symmetrical organization of the composition. Also unusual is the manner in which the artist has used the lotus plant motif to connect the various events and dynamically infuse the entire composition. The exuberance of the flowering plant motif, however, is visually overbearing and the individual vignettes are not easily separated from the background.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact date for this elaborate sculpture. It is assigned to the twelfth century based on a comparison with dated Nepali manuscript illuminations of the period. In this representation the central Buddha's garment is plain and diaphanous, while in most other scenes of his life, the robe is indicated by linear folds. This articulate manner of depicting the drapery and prominent stance of the standing figures are strongly reminiscent of images seen frequently in eleventh–twelfth-century manuscript illuminations from Bihar. Another curious stylistic element is the portrayal of the smaller Buddhas, whose faces are remarkably similar to those seen in fifth-century Sarnath Buddha images. Yet the principal Buddha figure, with its sharply delineated facial features and constricted waist, is more like a twelfth-century Nepali image. Such stylistic archaisms and juxtapositions are not surprising in Nepali art.

S24 *The Goddess Vasudhara* *Color plate, p. 48*



S24 The Goddess Vasudhara
Twelfth century
Copper alloy with gilt and semiprecious stones; 6 in (15.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.79.9.6
Literature: Kramrisch 1964, pp. 69, 131, no. 15; Pal 1966, p. 82, fig. 86.

The concept and iconography of Vasudhara have already been discussed (see S21), only minor iconographic differences will be noted here. The sheaf of grain held usually by the middle left hand is missing in this example. The *Prajnaparamita* is placed on a lotus held by the goddess's uppermost left hand; in S21 the book is held directly in the hand. It was customary in Buddhist images, especially in India, to place an attribute on a lotus. The lower right hand is fully open in the gesture of adoring the *tathagata* as unambiguously as in the earlier figure.

In terms of modeling and ornamentation, the two bronzes differ little. The sensuous appeal of this figure is slightly more enhanced by the articulate delineation of the diaphanous garment hugging the belly and left breast. Interestingly, the upper and lower garments are of the same material and the figure may be draped in one or two pieces of cloth. The overall visual effect of the two bronzes, however, is quite different. The arms of the larger bronze do not impinge upon the body as they do in the smaller figure. Consequently the outline is more clearly defined in the larger bronze and a greater sense of volume is achieved. The smaller figure, with her richly encrusted jewelry, greater undulation of garment pleats, and more pronounced sway of head and body, is certainly a more animated sculpture.



S25 The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara
Twelfth century
Copper alloy with gilt and semiprecious stones; 10 3/4 in (27.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Cohn; M.80.222

With his right hip gently thrust sideways, the crowned figure stands in perfect balance. The palm of the right arm is open and fully outstretched, while the left hand holds the stem of the lotus. The long sinuous stem extending to the height of the bodhisattva's shoulder is attached to the arm and carries a flower. Avalokitesvara is adorned with the sacred thread, simple inlaid ornaments, and three-lobed crown. An effigy of the Buddha Amitabha embellishes the central lobe. The bodhisattva wears a dhoti and sash tied diagonally across the thighs.

This handsome bronze represents a form of Avalokitesvara, bodhisattva of compassion, that has remained extremely popular in Nepal. The earliest examples in stone date from the sixth century (Pal 1974a), although earlier prototypes must have existed. Endless versions of this image were made well into the nineteenth century (S68), and it is often extremely difficult to precisely date individual representations.

This particular figure is strongly reminiscent of Lichchhavi bodhisattvas, but so early a date seems unlikely. The suave modeling, elegant simplicity, and gentle, introspective facial expression are features clearly derived from Lichchhavi sculptures. Nevertheless, the broad face and floral designs on the border of the dhoti, sash, and band of the crown (see back view) indicate a later, perhaps twelfth-century, date.



S26 The Goddess Tara
Twelfth century
Copper alloy with gilt, pigment, and semiprecious stones; 71/2 in (19.0 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener; M.72.108.8

This image represents a classic representation of a Nepali goddess and was employed ubiquitously to depict both Hindu and Buddhist goddesses. The Hindu goddess Uma, for example, is also depicted holding a lotus (see S8). When the goddess is shown alone as in this example and in a standing posture, she very likely represents the Buddhist goddess Tara, rather than the Hindu Uma. When the Hindus worship their goddess by herself, they generally use the image showing her destroying the buffalo demon (S17). Thus, such isolated images of a goddess holding the blue lotus, in particular, may be identified as the Buddhist Tara.

With her right hip prominently thrust outward, the goddess stands gracefully on a plain base, which was once inserted in a lotus. The flowing ends of her sari balance the shape of her outstretched right arm. She wears the usual ornaments and tiara, and her hair is gathered in a bouffant and painted black, indicating that the bronze may have once been used in Tibet. The various ornaments are inlaid with semiprecious stones.

The figure is somewhat more perfunctorily modeled at the back than at the front. The amplitude of the hips is reminiscent of female figures of the early Lichchhavi period, and the date suggested here may be somewhat conservative.

Vairochana





Amoghasiddhi



Amitabha



Ratnasambhava

S27 Ritual Crown
Twelfth century
Copper with gilt and semiprecious stones; 11 in (28 cm)
Gift of the Ahmanson Foundation; M.81.67
Literature: Pal 1982, p. 11, fig. 3.

Such crowns are worn by Buddhist priests (*vajracharyas*) during the performance of religious rituals (see P19). Invariably such crowns bear images of four of the five transcendental Buddhas, thereby establishing the priest's homology with the Buddha essence as well as the cosmic principle, since the Five Tathagatas symbolize the five directions. The *tathagatas* represented here are Vairochana, Amitabha, possibly Ratnasambhava, and Amoghasiddhi. The fifth member of the pentad, Akshobhya, is not shown physically but is symbolized by the thunderbolt crowning the summit of the crown. The *tathagatas* are crowned and bejeweled, as they should be during the consecration ceremony (Abhisheka) of the Yogatantra. Each *tathagata* sits on a lotus atop the face of glory (*kirtimukha*) and is surrounded by an aureole with a border of pearls and stylized flames. The front of the crown is further enriched with similar aureoles enclosing floral designs of inset semiprecious stones. A band inlaid in a similar fashion is attached to the bottom of the crown only in the front. At the back, the band is incised with a lively meandering scroll. Two other bands incised with floral patterns divide the crown vertically into three cusped zones, which may signify the threefold vertical division of the universe in Indian cosmology (earth, atmosphere, and heaven). At the apex of this crown is a lotus from which emerges the assertive *vajra*, symbol of Vajrayana Buddhism.

In a previous publication (see reference above), I suggested that the crown may have been made in the sixteenth century. An almost identical crown, however, bearing an inscription recording its date of manufacture as A.D. 1145 has recently been acquired by the Musée Guimet in Paris (Beguin 1984). A close comparison of the two crowns clearly indicates that the museum's example cannot be dated later than the twelfth century.

S28 *A Buddha with a Bowl*



S28 A Buddha with a Bowl
Twelfth–thirteenth century
Copper alloy with gilt; 4 5/8 in (11.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.78.9.19
Literature: Rowland 1963, pp. 55, 132, no. 16; Pal 1966, p. 86, no. 91.

The only iconographic difference between this and the earlier Buddha (S7) is the addition of the bowl in the figure's hands. Although the bowl may be an attribute of Amitabha, a vase containing foliage is the more universally acknowledged symbol of Amitabha. This particular bowl is in fact a mendicant's begging bowl, which is more appropriate for Buddha Sakyamuni. Bhaishajyaguru, the Buddha of healing, holds a similar bowl but usually only with his left hand.

The ambiguity of the figure's exact identification is only exceeded by the uncertainty of its date. Although Rowland (1963) was incorrect in considering it as a bronze from Kashmir, his observation that "this image is another illustration of the enduring influence of the Gupta ideal, long after the style and the religion it served in India had vanished" is appropriate. A comparison with the earlier bronze demonstrates the astonishing perseverence of the style. Nevertheless, certain details indicate a considerably later date. A trite, mechanical quality describes the modeling; the contours are not as smooth as in the earlier bronze; the elbows form sharp angles and the knees are made square; the lines of the eyebrows are more slanting while the earlobes are more elongated and pierced; finally, the folds of the garments are treated with inordinate fussiness. The original model for this bronze must have been particularly sacrosanct for at least one other, although later, version is known (Gordon 1967, p. 53).



S29 *The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara*
Thirteenth century
Copper alloy with traces of gilt, semiprecious stones, and glass; 24 1/2 in (62.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.81.8.1
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 84, fig. 89; Beguin 1974, fig. 17; Pal 1974a, fig. 194; von Schroeder 1981, pp. 348–49, fig. 90G.

Except for its dimensions and details, this large and attractive figure of the Avalokitesvara is iconographically very similar to the earlier image (S25). Invariably in this image type (see S37, S43, S68), the bodhisattva stands in graceful *déhanchement*, usually on a lotus base, which is missing here. The pleated folds of his dhoti fall elegantly between his legs. A sash is tied diagonally across his thighs, and he wears a sacred thread and customary tiara. He holds the stalk of the lotus with his left hand and extends his right hand in the gesture of charity. In the central medallion of the tiara is the figure of a transcendental Buddha. Usually this Buddha is Amitabha to whose family the bodhisattva belongs. Here, however, the Buddha does not display Amitabha's meditation gesture; rather, the gesture of reassurance formed by his right hand suggests Amoghasiddhi. Whether this deviation from the norm is intentional or accidental is unknown.

The bronze is cracked along both legs, and the lotus is slightly dented. Much of the gilding has disappeared, although some traces linger on the body. These damages were likely sustained during an earthquake, a not infrequent occurrence in the country's history. Nevertheless, the modeling of the figure and the face, fortunately intact, has the soft and serene expression characteristic of Early Malla-period sculpture. The simplicity of the figure and exuberance of the ornamentation strike a pleasing balance.



S30 *Sivalinga with Four Faces*
Thirteenth century
Copper with gilt; 9 1/4 in (23.5 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Alston Callahan; M.82.166a–b

The linga is by far the most eminent symbol of Siva, one of the major gods of Hinduism. In its simplest form, it is an abstract columnar object with rounded top, which is placed in a container for collecting a concoction of water, milk, and clarified butter that is poured daily over the linga as part of its ritual bath. Generally, the main object of worship in a temple of Siva is a stone linga. Often, however, such lingas are covered with a gilt metal sheath, such as this example.

When a linga is adorned with four faces oriented to the cardinal directions, it is known as a *mukhalinga*. The shaft of the linga itself symbolizes the fifth direction or the center. It is left unadorned in keeping with the Hindu belief that the Absolute is formless. Thus the linga with four faces is an object symbolizing the entire cosmos.

The four visible heads are known as Mahadeva or Sadyojata (East, earth), Nandivaktra or Tatpurusha (West, wind), Aghora or Bhairava (South, fire), and Umavaktra or Vamadeva (North, water). The fifth head, which is rarely shown, is called Sadasiva or Isana and symbolizes the center and the sky.

The differences between the four faces are indicated in this example by both obvious and subtle means. The most obvious is the terrifying face of Bhairava (see S56, S58). On the upper lip of Mahadeva is etched a moustache. On the forehead of Mahadeva is the third eye, while on Nandin's forehead is the sectarian mark of the Saivas. This mark is also given to Uma, whose head represents, as is customary in Nepal, the androgynous aspect of Siva and Uma (see S15). That the left half of the face depicts a female is evident from the differences in the shapes of the earrings and lips and the indication of the moustache only on the right side. Otherwise, all four heads have the same hairstyles, crowns, and ornaments (Bhairava wears ear-ornaments in the form of snakes), and all four hold the rosary with the right hand and flowering vase with the left. Around the middle of the linga is tied a floral band; a snake encircles the bottom and raises its hood between the Mahadeva and Nandin heads.

Each individual head, separately made and attached to the shaft, is well formed. Although rendered in repoussé the heads are defined by a remarkable sense of volume, enhanced also by the gracefully rearing snake. The facial features, hair, and ornaments are articulated with delicacy and finesse. The broad faces are dominated by large staring eyes, which must have had a mesmeric effect on the devotee.



Uma



Bhairava



Nandin



Mahadeva



S31 *The God Vishnu*
Fourteenth century
Copper alloy with gilt and semiprecious stones;
8 3/8 in (21.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.1.8
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 87, fig. 94; Pal 1970, fig. 34; von Schroeder 1981, pp. 348–49, fig. 90E.

The principal iconographic difference between this Vishnu and the tenth-century example (S13) is that here the god holds the flaming wheel with his upper right hand and the club with the corresponding left hand. Indeed, the disposition of the attributes in this example is typical of Vishnu images in Nepal since the early Lichchhavi period. As is usual, he wears a dhoti with elegantly hanging pleats. The rigid frontality of the figure is somewhat offset by the pleats, flowing and undulating ends of the sash beside each leg, and foliage at the right that springs with great flourish from the flat base. The jewelries are far less lavish in this example than in the earlier Vishnu, and the well-modeled form of the figure is more clearly defined. The proportions, too, are different. The fourteenth-century figure is somewhat stockier with broad shoulders and solid limbs. Perhaps the most interesting iconographic feature is an oval mark on the forehead, which looks like the third eye of Siva. The earlier Vishnu also displays a Saiva trait: the erect phallus.

Several details of this sculpture suggest a fourteenth-century date. The simple floral design of the short dhoti is frequently depicted in Early Malla sculptures as are the armlets and earrings. In most Lichchhavi images, Vishnu wears serpent armbands; the design is quite different in the tenth-century repoussé example in the collection. The simple earrings are also a feature of Malla rather than Lichchhavi Vishnu images, as is the absence of the *kirtimukha* in the crown. Finally, the broad face is similar to that seen in other figures of the period (S27, S30, S34).





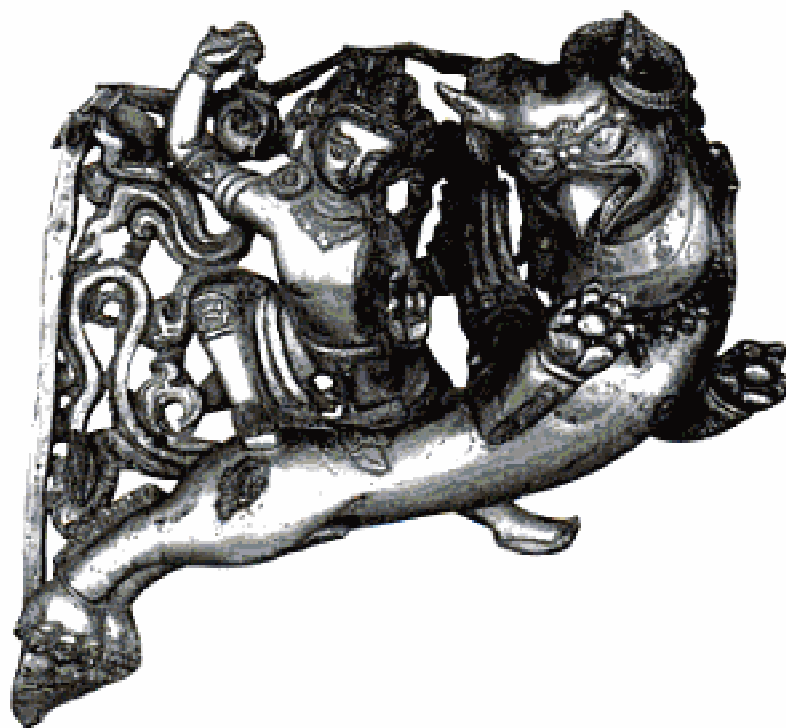
S32 *The Goddess Chamunda*
Fourteenth century
Copper with traces of gilt, pigment, and semiprecious stones; 8 in (20.3 cm)
General Acquisitions Fund; M.80.3
Literature: Larson et al. 1980, p. 57; Pal 1980, p. 88; von Schroeder 1981, p. 352, fig. 92A.

The emaciated goddess Chamunda is seated with her legs widely spread apart on a seat formed by three skulls. Her bare, emaciated torso with pendulous breasts is adorned with an elaborate necklace. The lower part of the body is draped with a garment that clings to her bony legs. A bear's skin, indicated more clearly at the back, is tied around her waist. In addition to anklets, armlets, bracelets, and earrings, a garland of severed heads bedecks the goddess. A tiara of skulls, held by a band, the ends of which project like palm leaves on either side of her head, adorns the high crown of flying locks, which were once painted orange. Around the head is tied a second fillet with its ends spread fanlike just above the ears. Her sixteen arms display various attributes, mostly weapons. Beginning with the uppermost left hand and continuing clockwise, they are the elephant's foot, trident with skulls, club, shield, severed head, gesture of admonition, skull-cup, chopper, sword, trident, noose (?), and second elephant's foot.

The feet of the goddess rest on a prostrate, crowned figure representing a corpse. The seat of skulls indicates that the goddess is depicted in her usual habitat, the cremation grounds, although the locale may also be identified as a battleground, which she stalks. The two ghoulish creatures (*pisacha*) and scavenging animal, either a dog or jackal, are further symbolic of either place.

Chamuda, known also as Kali, is the celebrated Hindu goddess of death. She may be represented alone or in the company of a group of goddesses (P25), known collectively as the Eight Mothers (Matrika). She was created by the great goddess Durga, who gave her the title Chamunda because she killed the demons Chanda and Munda. Very likely, this image of Chamunda belonged to a group of the Eight Mothers, whose worship is common among both Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal. In one of her right hands is the chopper surmounted by the thunderbolt, a symbol of Vajrayana Buddhism, which may indicate that the devotee responsible for this image was a Buddhist. Another significant detail is her seat formed with three skulls, which may symbolize the three ages: past, present, and future.

Not only is this bronze iconographically complex, but visually it is a work of compelling although macabre, imagination. To my knowledge, no other bronze Chamunda, whether in Nepal or India, provides so elaborate a tableau, rich in figural forms and graphic in its portrayal of bizarre imagery. The arresting figure of the goddess is modeled with consummate artistry. Her grotesqueness is made more expressive by the articulated ribcage, concave pelvis, tentacular arms and legs, subtle modeling of the back, and remarkably expressive face and hairstyle. The entire tableau is marked by a rhythmic flow between the various figures, particularly the two ghoulish creatures, one of whom sticks his tongue out while the other raises his left hand to collect the blood dripping from the severed head held by Chamunda.

S33 *Two Plaques from a Throne Back*
C. 1400
Copper alloy with gilt
left: 7 x 8 3/4 in (17.1 x 22.2 cm)
right: 7 1/2 x 8 1/8 in (19.1 x 20.7 cm)
Gift of the Ahmanson Foundation; M.74.10.2a–b

These two plaques were once attached to the sides of a throne or small shrine. Each depicts a celestial figure, bejeweled and crowned, riding a winged griffin. With their leonine bodies fully outstretched and their forelegs raised, the griffins appear to be leaping or pouncing. Although their bodies are fully leonine, their heads are composites of various creatures. They have the prominent beak of an eagle or *garuda* and two pairs of horns each, one of a bull and the other of a ram. The celestial riders appear to hold the reins, which are missing here, with one hand while raising the other hand as if to strike the animal. The griffin's tail and flying scarf of the rider fill the remaining inner space; on the other side was a border of beads and flames as in the earlier repoussé plaque (S17).

The function of the combined motif was to guard the throne from evil influences that might attempt to cause harm to the deity. By providing the menacing form with wings, beaks, two pairs of horns, and lion's body, the artist has formulated a creature more powerful than the individual animals whose features it combines. Usually in such plaques, the background design is cut away to make the outline particularly animated. Each panel is a beautiful composition of lively forms and patterns interacting with one another with rhythmic fluidity.



S34 *Amoghapasa Lokesvara*
Fifteenth century or earlier
Wood with traces of pigment; 66 1/2 in (168.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection;
M.77.19.28
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 88, no. 96.

A manifestation of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, Amoghapasa is one of the most popular Buddhist deities in Nepal. He is considered to be one of the eight tutelary deities of the valley, and a pious Buddhist is expected to perform his rite (Ashtamivrata) on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of each month. Images of Amoghapasa, thus, are frequently represented in both sculpture and painting (see S55, P18).

In this monumental wood sculpture, the god stands frontally on a lotus. Only three of his eight arms remain complete; the forearms of the others, now missing, were once tenoned to the torso. The two right hands display the gestures of charity and reassurance; the remaining left hand once held a waterpot (see S55 for the complete iconography). His hair is gathered in a tall chignon, against which is seated the tiny image of Amitabha, his parental Buddha. Originally the entire figure was brightly painted and embellished with detachable jewelry (see S35) and various garments, as may still be seen in a group in worship in the Kva-Bahal monastery in Patan (von Schroeder 1981, p. 375). Now only traces of faded pigment adhere to the garment and hands.

The date of the sculpture is suggested by a comparison with the beautiful bracket figures of such Early Malla shrines as the Indresvara Mahadeva temple at Panauti and the Siva temple at Sulihma-tol in Patan (See Slusser 1982, 2: figs. 192, 194). Both this sculpture and the next entry, the figure of Tara (S35), are stylistically related to those in the two temples mentioned. The Panauti temple was certainly built in the thirteenth century, while the Patan temple was constructed in the fourteenth century. This Amoghapasa can also be compared with a gigantic Vishnu image, also at Panauti, dedicated by Jayasimha Ramavarddhana around 1400 (Slusser 1979, fig. 18).



S35 The Goddess Tara
Fifteenth century or earlier
Wood with traces of pigment, detachable copper ornaments, and semiprecious stones; 24 1/2 in (62.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.1.10
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 89, no. 97.

Although the attribute is missing from the figure's left hand, very likely the image is Buddhist and represents the goddess Tara. The right hand is outstretched in the gesture of charity, and the left hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance. The lotus flower was probably once attached to this hand. She is seated in the *lalitasana* position on a lotus. Her body was once painted completely and her head was probably adorned with a detachable tiara. Some ornaments are still affixed to the figure.

Stylistically the sculpture is closely related to the much larger figure of Amoghapasa Lokesvara (S34). The broad face with rather narrow eyes and small mouth, characteristic of Early Malla wood sculptures, is similar in both figures. Both sculptures also share other details such as the drapery pattern, coloring, palm designs, and modeling. Thus, very likely both these polychromed wood figures were made in the same atelier, perhaps in Patan.

S36 Chintamani Lokesvara
Fifteenth century
Wood with pigment; 52 1/2 in (133.3 cm)
Gift of Anna Bing Arnold; M.84.93

This impressive wood sculpture represents Chintamani Lokesvara, a form of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. Lokesvara (lord of the world) is a common epithet of Avalokitesvara, and the word *chintamani* means "wishing gem." Thus, Chintamani Lokesvara symbolizes that form of the bodhisattva who grants all wishes of a devotee. Little known in India, he is an important figure in Nepali Buddhist ritual and iconography, and special shrines are dedicated to him in monasteries.

While a devotee can wish for both mundane and spiritual benefits, the iconography of the figure principally emphasizes material wealth. With his left hand the bodhisattva holds a garland of gems, as does Vasudhara, and with his right hand he shakes a gem-filled tree. Some representations (S71) include attendants collecting the gems in sacks. Thus, Chintamani Lokesvara serves the same function as does Vasudhara: he helps his devotees acquire wealth. The icon also has a more lofty significance, for the tree is a cosmic symbol for wisdom or knowledge.

In this sculpture the bodhisattva stands gracefully in exaggerated contrapposto with his left foot placed behind the right leg on a fully opened lotus base. Lavishly ornamented, the extended right hand displays the gesture of charity and the left hand holds a garland of gems attached to the tree. The posture is well known in Indian and Nepali iconography and is commonly given to goddesses. The principal Hindu deity who stands in this posture is the god Krishna when he plays the flute and tends his cattle. Among Buddhist gods, the posture was used almost exclusively for Chintamani Lokesvara.

The bodhisattva is framed by two columnar tree trunks that rise from the lotus base. The tendrillike branches, leaves, and flowers are decorated with such a wide variety of designs that they are almost indistinguishable. Symmetrically arranged in clusters, the foliage forms a canopy over the bodhisattva. Emphasizing the divine and imaginary character of the tree, the artist has enlivened it with flying and perching birds, frolicking monkeys, and a climbing snake. Curiously, a pair of monkeys in the foliage is engaged in copulation, a strange naturalistic element for a divine image.

The entire sculpture was originally richly painted, much of the paint being now covered by soot, no doubt from lamps burnt before it for centuries. One can still discern, however, that the trunks were painted in red. Considering its age, the sculpture is in excellent condition except for minor cracks on the right arm and base. The superior carving of the elegant figure and tree with its intricately detailed leaves and flowers makes it abundantly clear that the unknown sculptor was a master wood-carver.



Detail





S37 *The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara*
Fifteenth century
Stone; 15 1/2 in (39.3 cm)
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart Acquisitions Fund;
M.82.40

The bodhisattva Avalokitesvara stands on a lotus base against an aureole enriched with a border of beads and flames. His head is surrounded by a flame-bordered nimbus. As he is very similar to two other representations of the bodhisattva in the collection (S25 and S29), only the differences will be noted here. The most noteworthy variance is the distinctive hairstyle emphasizing his ascetic nature. Also of significance is the addition of a second lotus behind the right hand. The stalks of both lotuses rise from the lotus base. Finally, continuing the Lichchhavi tradition, his necklace consists of a single strand of pearls. There are also differences in representation of other ornaments and in the manner of dress, particularly the dhoti and sash.

These minor deviations are often the only elements that reflect the artists' limited freedom. They do not, however, demonstrate either stylistic or chronological change. A comparison of this figure with the early-Lichchhavi bodhisattva (S6) demonstrates the astonishing conservatism of the Nepali tradition. The date of execution for this representation was arrived at by comparing the sculpture with dated works of the Early Malla period in situ in Nepal. The form of the lotus base and broad comma shapes of the flame motif occur frequently in Nepali art of the Early Malla period.



S38 A Preaching Buddha
Fifteenth century
Copper alloy with gilt and pigment; 10 in (25.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.21
Literature: Rowland 1964, p. 65, fig. 23; Pal 1966, p. 86, fig. 92.

A Buddha wearing monastic garb, with his right shoulder and arm uncovered, is seated in the classic meditation posture on a plain cushion. The garment is delineated by symmetrical striations and a thick border with narrow ridges. Some of the supernatural signs—three marks around the neck, elongated earlobes, tuft of hair between the eyebrows, curls, and *ushnisha* atop the head—are very clearly indicated. The hands of the figure form the turning of the wheel of the law gesture (*dharmachakrapravartanamudra*). This typically Buddhist gesture is displayed by the Buddha to symbolize his preaching of the first sermon at Sarnath near Varanasi. In Vajrayana art, the gesture is also associated with the transcendental Buddha, Vairochana. Thus, the figure may represent either the historical Buddha Sakyamuni or Vairochana.

The indigo pigment painted on the hair indicates that the bronze once graced a Tibetan monastery. Although sculpted in the round, the figure is flat and attenuated. The square face is typical of Nepali figures of the fifteenth century or later. The prominent curls and wide nose are also characteristic of later sculpture, even though the basic form continues the much earlier tradition.



S39 A Goddess of Abundance
Fifteenth century
Copper alloy with gilt and semiprecious stones; 6 7/8 in (17.5 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.20
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 82, no. 87; von Schroeder 1981, pp. 366–67, fig. 99I.

A goddess with four arms stands gracefully on a lotus base. Only the lower body is draped with a finely patterned garment. A sash forms a loop across her thighs and is tied below her waist on her right. She is adorned with inlaid ornaments in the usual manner. The two left hands hold the sheaf of grain and waterpot. The upper right hand displays the gesture of reassurance, the lower right hand forms the gesture of exposition and may have once held an object. A stalk of foliage rises elegantly from the base and supports the pot held in the goddess's lower left hand. Her forehead appears to be marked with a third eye.

Precise identification of the figure is problematic. In an earlier publication I suggested that the deity represented here is the Buddhist goddess of wealth, Vasudhara. All descriptions of Vasudhara, however, prescribe either two or six arms for the goddess (see S21, S24); this figure has four arms. Also, in no other Vasudhara image is a third eye depicted. The identification with Vasudhara was suggested primarily because of the presence of the pot and sheaf of grain, two of Vasudhara's attributes. These two attributes are also appropriate for Lakshmi, Hindu goddess of wealth, and thus it seems more correct to identify this figure simply as a goddess of abundance and prosperity.

By comparison with a Vasudhara dedicated in the year 1467 (Pal 1974a, fig. 39), this bronze seems much older. The sensuous form is modeled with considerable naturalism and a lively rhythm. Rather unusual is the rendering after the bronze was cast of the garment pattern in finely etched dots. A lug in which the metal was poured is still attached at the back, which is somewhat more summarily treated than the front. Nevertheless, the graceful posture and gentle smile on the goddess make this a charming bronze of the Early Malla period.



S40 Vishnu's Mount, Garuda
1500 or earlier
Copper alloy; 4 1/8 in (10.5 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.15
Literature: Kramrisch 1964, p. 129, no. 8; Pal 1966, p. 78, no. 78; Pal 1974a, fig. 106.

In this charming sculpture, Vishnu's devoted mount, Garuda (see S1) is represented genuflecting on a rocky base. He wears a short dhoti and tiara. Part of his hair is gathered in a bun and tied with a serpent, the rest falls at the back in beautifully delineated curls. Most of his ornaments, except the earrings and armlets, are in the form of snakes. Indeed, as is often the case in Nepal, but for his wings that spread like a cape from his shoulder, Garuda displays no other traits of his avian nature. His hands are joined in the gesture of adoration, and undoubtedly he was attached to an image of Vishnu.

While the iconography of the figure is straightforward, precise dating presents problems. Such semikneeling *garudas* appeared first in Nepal at least as early as the fifth century and persisted with remarkable tenacity well into the seventeenth century. The stylized design of the rocks on the base is a legacy of the Lichchhavi period and has continuously reappeared in sculpture through the centuries. Although this handsome sculpture seems stylistically related to several dated seventeenth-century examples (Pal 1974, figs. 48, 103–4), a somewhat earlier date—such as the fifteenth century—may be attributed to it because of its lively naturalism and excellent craftsmanship. The hairstyle and cape are rendered with stylish elegance and a flair for restrained ornamentation characteristic of the Early Malla period.



S41 A Pair of Lions
Kathmandu Valley or northwest Nepal; sixteenth century or earlier
Copper alloy with gilt
Each: 2 1/16 x 2 3/16 in (5.2 x 5.5 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund; M.82.200.1–2

These two heraldic lions were presumably acquired in northwest Nepal where they may have been made locally or imported from the Kathmandu Valley. The latter seems more likely considering the technical sophistication of the workmanship. The exact function of the animals is not known, but they may have embellished a small pedestal or throne on which an image was placed. Their forms are typical of guardian lions seen all over the valley.

Although the animals are somewhat conceptually rendered, the artist has succeeded in conveying their power and majesty. With their tails thrown across their backs and amusingly grimacing faces, both representations are lively and expressive. The animal forms are without doubt related to Chinese lions. No determination, however, has yet been made as to whether the Nepali artists adopted the forms and, if so, when. If adopted, then it is more likely that the form was derived from Tibet rather than directly from China. In Tibetan art similar lions were made at least as early as the fifteenth century if not earlier.



S42 *Indra, King of the Gods*
Sixteenth century
Bronze with gilt and semiprecious stones; 7 5/8 in (19.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.69.13.4
Literature: Glynn 1973, fig. 22.

The elaborately ornamented and crowned god is seated in the *maharajalila* (royal ease) posture. Originally the figure would have been seated on a lotus base, now missing. To support the stance, his left hand, which holds the stalk of a lotus, would have rested on the base. The flower attached to the stalk carries the thunderbolt. Another flower is attached to his right hand, which displays the gesture of exposition. His forehead is marked with the horizontally placed third eye, unlike the vertically incised third eye of Siva. The horizontal third eye and thunderbolt identify the figure as Indra rather than Vajrapani, who also takes the thunderbolt as his attribute (see S6). The third eye of Indra derives from the Vedic past. In Vedic literature, composed by the Aryans in India around 1000 B.C., Indra is said to possess one thousand eyes symbolic of his cosmic nature. Also, as a storm-god, Indra is frequently described as the thunderbolt wielder, and this weapon is his primary attribute. In addition, only in Nepal does Indra wear the kind of crown shown here.

This particular representation of Indra is characteristically Nepali and can be regarded as a local invention. The artist responsible for formulating the first image of Indra is not known. Nevertheless, he was obviously very creative, for within the limitations of his tradition, he has devised an elegant figure imposing in its grace and majesty. An early-sixteenth-century date for this bronze can be postulated by a comparison with another Indra consecrated in the year 1589 and now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Pal 1974a, fig. 42).



S43 *Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara*
Sixteenth century
Copper alloy with gilt and semiprecious stones; 5 1/8 in (13.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.18
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 80, no. 83.

Iconographically this small but attractive figure is no different from the earlier images of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (S25, S29, S37). It is a good example with which to demonstrate the astonishing continuity of form and style in Nepali art. The difference between this figure and the earlier examples are hardly perceptible. The face with its gentle expression has become slightly broader and is more typical of Late Malla-period figures. The proportions are somewhat stunted, the modeling is less svelte, and the posture lacks elegance. Nevertheless, the bodhisattva's sweet expression makes it an endearing figure.



S44 The Goddess Tara
Sixteenth century
Copper alloy with gilt; 5 1/8 in (13.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.75.4.17
Literature: Pal 1966, pp. 78–79, no. 81.

Probably intended for a domestic altar, this small image is not very different iconographically from the earlier example (S26). The only deviation occurs in the disposition of the right arm. Instead of displaying the gesture of charity, the right hand exhibits the gesture of teaching. Stylistic differences indicate a later date for this figure. Most noteworthy is the lack of articulation in the outline of the body and summary modeling, especially of the legs, which appear stiff and columnar. The posture is more awkward than in the earlier example, and on the whole the figure lacks the rhythm and sensuousness characteristic of earlier figural forms. The goddess is stylistically related to the sixteenth-century Avalokitesvara (S43).



S45 The Goddess Mahalakshmi
Sixteenth century
Bronze with gilt and semiprecious stones; 5 1/2 in (14.0 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener; M.72.108.5

With her right leg loosely placed on the left, the goddess is seated on a lion who crouches on a lotus base. Mahalakshmi wears her usual inlaid ornaments and tiara, and a third eye is marked on her forehead. Her sixteen arms display the following attributes and gestures (clockwise from the uppermost left hand): shield, kettledrum, bow, waterpot, book, noose, gestures of admonition and exposition, skull-cup, gesture of charity, lotus, trident, rosary, arrow, bell, and sword. The goddess can be identified as Mahalakshmi, member of the Eight Mothers worshiped by both Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal. The lion mount and most of the weapons identify her as a form of the Great Goddess Durga, while the lotus and waterpot are attributes of Lakshmi, goddess of wealth. Mahalakshmi (great Lakshmi) is the presiding deity of one of the three sections of the *Devimahatmya*.

Although the goddess is equipped with various lethal weapons, she is not a menacing figure. Rather, she appears quite placid and relaxed as she sits on her lion. The prevailing mood of tranquility is further conveyed by the lion, who like a fond pet turns his grinning face lovingly toward his mistress. Indeed, the animal, whose rich mane is stylishly delineated, adds an element of levity and whimsy to an otherwise sedate and dignified theme.

S46 The God Samvara
Sixteenth century
Sandstone; 20 in (50.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim; M.70.42.9



The iconography of this stone sculpture of Samvara is slightly less elaborate than the metal and painted depictions of the god in the collections (S65, P13, P19). He stands in the militant *pratyalidha* posture and tramples with his right foot the Hindu goddess Kalaratri and with his left foot Mahakala. Both figures are considerably effaced here, but their forms are better preserved in other examples. Three of Samvara's four heads and six arms are shown. His primary hands are crossed against his chest and hold the bell and thunderbolt. A second pair holds the kettledrum, waterpot, and cot's leg. The remaining pair stretch an elephant's skin behind him like a cape. He is adorned with a tiara, ornaments, and garland of severed heads. The aureole is decorated with an inner circle of pearls, row of thunderbolts, and finally, ring of fire.

The sculpture is stylistically more closely related to the fifteenth-century painting (P13) than to the eighteenth-century gilt bronze (S65). The proportions of the figure, shapes of the faces, spirited delineation of the posture, and prostrate figures below Samvara's feet are treated similarly.



S47 Amoghapasa Lokesvara
Late sixteenth century
Copper alloy with gilt; 9 1/8 in (23.1 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Anna Walter; M.83.220.8

Amoghapasa Lokesvara (see S34) stands gracefully on a lotus, the stem of which was once inserted into a base. He wears a dhoti, the usual ornaments, and a tiara. On his forehead is a rectangular mark, and his hair is arranged in a tall chignon. Two of his right hands hold the rosary and noose, while his other two hands form the gestures of charity and reassurance. The attributes in his left hands are (from top to bottom) the book, three-pronged staff (trident), lotus, and waterpot.

The bronze is stylistically closely related to the smaller figure of Avalokitesvara (S43). Both exhibit similar proportions and modeling, although the details in this bronze lack the finesse of the earlier work. The ornaments are given greater relief but are not as delicately rendered, and no inlay has been used to enhance the figure. The garments and sashes are more summarily delineated and are devoid of any rhythmic elegance. Despite these differences, the two bronzes may have been made in the same workshop.

S48 *The* Mahasiddha *Luyipa and Female Companion* *Color plate, p. 51*



S48 *The* Mahasiddha *Luyipa and Female Companion*
Patan or Thimi; early seventeenth century
Terra-cotta; 8 3/4 in (22.2 cm)
Gift of Professor and Mrs. Thomas Ballinger; M.80.97.1

This lively relief depicts the *mahasiddha* Luyipa seated on a deerskin against a landscape of rocks and trees. Luyipa is represented as an ascetic with his ribcage exposed. He wears plain ornaments and a *yogapatta* band across his chest. The band is used by yogis to tie their legs together during difficult yogic exercises. Luyipa's forehead is marked with a large dot, and his head is covered with a hat worn by Tibetans. With his right hand he is extracting the entrails of a fish, which he is devouring. On his left is his female partner who holds a cup in her right hand.

Except in paintings, representations of *mahasiddhas* are rare in Nepal. This relief may belong to a unique terra-cotta series of *mahasiddhas* commissioned by a Newari Buddhist who was particularly influenced by Tibetan Buddhism. Certainly the iconography and landscaping reflect strong Tibetan influences. The artist modeled his relief from either a painted example or a sketch such as those illustrated in D10. Only two others of this series of terra-cotta *mahasiddhas* are known. One is in the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Varanasi, the other is in the National Museum in Nepal (Waldschmidt 1969, fig. 29). Originally there must have been eighty-four plaques representing the eighty-four *mahasiddhas*.

It is generally believed that Luyipa lived sometime in the seventh century and was a member of the royal dynasty of Magadha (present-day Bihar in India). He is supposed to have eaten the entrails of fish and undertaken other bizarre practices to rid himself of caste prejudices and food taboos.

The relief may have been made in Patan or in the village of Thimi, which has remained the leading pottery center in the valley. Stylistically, the relief is related to friezes decorating the fountain within the palace at Patan (Slusser 1982, 2: fig. 238). Those were carved in 1647, and the museum's example could have been molded earlier in the century. Recently a similar plaque, also representing a *mahasiddha*, appeared on the market and was technically examined in the Oxford University laboratories. According to the test, that piece was fired sometime between three and six centuries ago.

S49 *The Dancing Siva on His Bull, Nandi*



S49 *The Dancing Siva on His Bull, Nandi*
Seventeenth century
Stone; 8 1/8 in (20.6 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund; M.77.22

The eighteen-armed god is dancing with his right leg raised and suspended parallel to the ground on the back of a bull who is seated on a lotus. The god wears the usual ornaments, tiara, and garland of severed heads. Snakes form his ear-ornaments, a skull adorns his tiara, and a crescent moon embellishes his chignon. An animal skin is slung over his right knee, and he also wears a bone apron. Two of his hands form gestures of the dance, and a second pair of hands displays the gesture of reassurance. Other attributes include (from top left) the shield, bow, trident, thunderbolt, snake, waterpot, conch, rosary, kettledrum, arrow, and sword. A few weapons are effaced and cannot be recognized.

Although the god is identified as Siva, similar iconography characterizes a tantric form of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara known as Padmanarttesvara (lotus lord of the dance). Padmanarttesvara is described as eighteen armed, and his hands are said to carry lotuses only (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 133–34). Some attributes held by this figure are also given to an eight-armed image of Padmanarttesvara, and in all his three known forms he is said to dance in this posture. The image of Padmanarttesvara was no doubt based on that of the dancing Siva, and Avalokitesvara's iconography was strongly influenced by that of Siva. Nevertheless, in all his descriptions, Padmanarttesvara is said to wear the effigy of Amitabha on his crown, which this figure does not, and in no image of Padmanarttesvara does the bull serve as his mount. Thus, it seems more appropriate to identify the figure as the Hindu god Siva (for another example, see Waldschmidt 1969, fig. 23).

Essentially the form is derived from much earlier images of the dancing Siva popular in eastern India, particularly Bengal (Bhattasali 1929, pls. 42–45). There are, however, minor differences in the posture and disposition of the arms. This particular example is deeply cut away from the aureole and is as a result a lively composition. Siva is represented as a tall, lissome figure and nimble dancer, while the solidly stable bull has been rendered with observed naturalism. Most known Nepali images of the dancing Siva appear to be of the Late Malla period. For another, although iconographically different, example in the collection see S57.



S50 *The Bodhisattva Manjusri with Companions*
Seventeenth century
Brass; 5 1/4 in (13.3 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Anna Walter; M.83.220.4

Although small, this is an interesting sculpture for several reasons. It is conceived as a typically Nepali miniature shrine. The figures are set off by an elaborate arch supported on columns rather than by an aureole. The arch is embellished with *makaras* and a stylized face of glory at the apex. Fringed by the flame motif, the arch is surmounted by an umbrella and two flags. The arch with its columns was very likely cast separately and affixed to the base.

The double-tiered, receding base supports three figures, the central personage being larger than the others. The four-armed bodhisattva is seated in the lotus posture on a lion. The attribute in the upper right hand is missing, but very likely it was a sword. The lower right hand holds the arrow, the upper left hand grasps the bow. The second left hand must once have held a book. The attendant figure on the right is a four-armed Ganesa. Except for the cup in his lower left hand, the other attributes are unrecognizable. The figure on the other side has an awesome face and also has four arms. His two principal hands hold the chopper and cup, while the upper left hand holds the cot's leg. The object in the fourth hand is not recognizable. Very likely Ganesa's right hand also held the chopper.

The central figure may be identified as the bodhisattva Manjusri. In the Hindu pantheon the lion is Durga's mount (see P9), but Buddhists associate the animal with Manjusri. The deity here is male rather than female. Moreover, the bow and arrow are attributes of Manjusri as are the sword and book. The position of the upper arm indicates that it very likely once held a sword, whereas, in many other representations, Manjusri holds a book with his left hand held against his chest. That the attendant figure on the right is Ganesa is in no doubt; the other companion may represent either Karttikeya or Bhairava. The association of these Hindu deities with Manjusri is not unusual for he is identified with both Karttikeya and Siva (see D19).



S51 Uma-Mahesvara and Other Deities
C. 1700
Stone; 18 1/2 in (47.0 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim; M.70.42.10

Below an elaborate arch (*torana*) are seated on a lotus rising from a lotus base the principal deities Siva and Uma. In addition to his usual attributes, such as snakes and matted hair, Siva holds in two of his hands the kettledrum and trident. His second right hand is held against his chest in the gesture of exposition, and his other hand cups one of Uma's breasts. She extends her right arm around his back and holds in her left hand a flower. Directly below them are his bull and her lion. Seated at the base of the columns on either side are their sons Ganesa and Karttikeya. The elaborate arch contains in addition to *makaras* and *nagas* (half-human, half-serpent creatures) several deities. In the upper row are (clockwise from the left) the sun-god, four-headed Brahma, goddess (perhaps Brahmani), and moon-god. Occupying the center of the register, immediately below a three-tiered umbrella, is the god Vishnu riding his mount. On either side of him are his two consorts Lakshmi and Sarasvati, goddess of prosperity and goddess of wisdom respectively.

A comparison with the much earlier relief depicting the same subject (S8) reveals how different the later stele is. No attempt has been made here to indicate locale or depict narrative content. Siva's attendants are dispensed with, but a number of Hindu deities are introduced. The arrangement of the figures is much more formal and hierarchical. The composition seems particularly crowded, even though the sculptor has tried to provide some relief by carving the figures of Siva and Uma completely in the round.



S52 The Goddess Vasudhara
Dated 1720
Copper alloy with gilt and traces of pigment; 4 1/2 in (11.4 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener; M.72.108.7

The concept and iconography of this goddess has been discussed elsewhere (S21); only minor differences will be noted here. The sheaf of grain held in the goddess's middle right hand is so stylized as to be scarcely recognizable; the sheaf of gems in the corresponding left hand is missing; and the waterpot in the lower left hand overflows with vegetation.

The brief inscription written on the base makes this little bronze important. It was evidently dedicated in the month of Pausha (December–January) in the Newari year 840, corresponding to A.D. 1720. The broad face, slim torso, small breasts, and summary articulation of the form are characteristic of Late Malla-period sculptures.

S53 *A Pair of Donors*

S53 A Pair of Donors
C. 1725
Brass
Male: 8 1/8 in (21.0 cm)
Female: 7 1/2 in (19.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. William A. Klein; M.80.225.1–2

As is the custom in Nepali donor portraits, the male is shown kneeling and the woman is seated. Both hold their hands in front of them in the gesture of devotion (*anjalimudra*) and wear garments that are still worn by the Newars in the valley. The statues were either attached to an image or placed in a temple or monastery.

The exact date of the sculptures is difficult to determine. They are stylistically related to two other portraits dedicated in 1694 (Pal 1974a, fig. 47; Slusser 1982, 2: fig. 69). When the typically Newari cap worn by the male came into fashion is not known. Artistic evidence does not support a date much earlier than the eighteenth century. Portraits in Nepal (see P11) are generally idealized, but here, except for their wide open, staring eyes, the faces are distinctly particularized.

S54 *Comb with the God Vishnu*





S54 Comb with the God Vishnu
C. 1725
Ivory; 3 5/8 in (9.2 cm)
Gift of Don and Corky Whittaker; M.80.232.1
Literature: Pal 1981, p. 76, no. 65.

This rare ivory comb is surmounted by the figure of the Hindu god Vishnu seated on a lotus. The god holds in his four hands the conch, wheel, club, and lotus flower. Crowned, ornamented, and wearing the sacred thread and flower garland (*vanamala*), the deeply carved figure is set off against an aureole with a stylized flame border. The lotus petals and flame motif are fully carved on the back. The center of the aureole is formed in a niche that may have held a glass or metal mirror.

Although the object served a secular function, the divine image reflects the deeply religious inclination of the person for whom it was made. Very few combs from ancient Nepal in any medium have survived, and no other example in ivory is known. An ivory mirror handle in the National Museum in Kathmandu (Waldschmidt 1969, fig. 65) is dated 1733. That handle also is decorated with Vaishnava themes on one side and Saiva on the other side in a style very similar to this comb.



S55 *Amoghapasa Lokesvara*
C. 1750
Copper alloy with gilt; 6 3/16 in (15.7 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Anna Walter; M.83.220.7

This representation of the bodhisattva Amoghapasa Lokesvara reflects interesting variations from the earlier example (S47). Not only do different ornament designs describe the figure, but the bodhisattva is given an additional pearl necklace. Moreover, a long scarf drapes his shoulders and hangs all the way along his legs to form a spiral design above the ankles. Although he has the same attributes as the earlier example, their dispositions vary considerably. The hand in front of the chest holds the rosary, while the uppermost right hand displays a combination of the gestures of adoration and teaching. The three-pronged staff is here held by the second right hand, while the noose is transferred to one of the left hands. The spouted waterpot (*kamandalu*) is usually carried by ascetics.

The execution of details is even more perfunctory in this bronze than in the earlier figure. Moreover, the stance of the figure is somewhat awkward, while the proportions are quite different. The waist is more pinched, making the thrust of the right hip relatively more pronounced. The back of this bronze is also more crudely finished.

S56 *The God Bhairava with Devi*



S56 *The God Bhairava with Devi*
Dated 1754
Copper alloy with gilt; 15 3/4 in (40.0 cm)
Gift of the Ahmanson Foundation; M.74.10.1
Literature: Pal 1975, pp. 98, 128, no. 64.

Bhairava stands on a lotus base in a militant posture with his feet placed on the back of two crawling, naked attendants, each of whom holds a cup. He has five ferocious faces, four of which are oriented toward the four directions and the fifth is placed at the top. In addition to a necklace and bone apron, several snakes and a garland of severed heads adorn his ample form. The attributes and gestures of his eighteen hands (clockwise from upper left) are the shield, rope, bow, cot's leg, musical instrument, bell, staff with human head, gesture of reassurance, gesture supporting his consort, cup, gesture of charity, thunderbolt, kettledrum, trident, severed head, arrow, elephant goad, and sword. His consort stands in a dancing posture with her right leg raised and left leg placed on her lion mount. She looks up at her lord and displays the gestures of charity and exposition. Attached to the lotus base is another head of Bhairava with open mouth, through which a pipe was inserted to dispense beer to the devotees.

An inscription along the lotus base states that the image was dedicated in N.S. 874, corresponding to A.D. 1754, to please a tutelary divinity (*ishtadevata*). Neither the name of the donor nor the occasion is mentioned. Evidently the image was consecrated for personal use. Images of Bhairava are quite common in Nepal, but this bronze example is unusual for several reasons. Rarely in such representations is the god depicted with his consort, and, to my knowledge, the masklike head added to the base is unique. The sculpture has been cast in several pieces and skillfully assembled.



S57 *A Tympanum with the Dancing Siva*
C. 1750
Wood; 32 in (81.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart; M.76.48.3

Such tympanums are typical features of traditional Nepali temple architecture and are placed above a door or window. The central figure dancing on a bull is Siva, and it can therefore be surmised that the tympanum once adorned a Saiva temple. The shape of such tympanums is always in the form of a lunette, and in Sanskrit they are called *chandrasala*.

The plump figure of Siva in the center is similar to that of Bhairava, but the face is not terrifying. He sports a moustache and has slightly rolling eyes and furrowed brows. His hair is arranged in a chignon, unlike Bhairava's flying locks. The snake ear-ornaments and garland of severed heads enhance his macabre nature, but he must be identified as Siva rather than Bhairava because of the bull (Bhairava's mount is the dog). With his surviving hands he carries (clockwise from upper left) the flower (?), elephant goad, severed head, rosary, unidentified object, strings, and battleax. Four attendants strike dancing postures on either side of Siva. Flanking him immediately are two celestial drummers, each with four arms. With two hands, each is engaged in playing a double-drum. The other two attendants have animal heads and hold the kettledrum with the raised hand.

Various creatures embellish a large portion of the tympanum and include *makaras*, writhing dragons, and a pair of anthropomorphized *nagas* whose legs are caught in the talons of a *garuda*, who once occupied the empty section at the apex of the arch. The remaining space is filled with ornamental vegetal and flame motifs. The base is adorned with the lotus motif.

Except for the dragons, most of the creatures are familiar inhabitants of Nepali art. The dragon is a Chinese motif derived from Tibet. Its contorted form, however, comfortably suits the Hindu context. The entire tympanum was carved in four sections and fitted together. Parts of the animal-headed attendant on Siva's right are modern replacements.



S58 Bhairava Shrine
C. 1750
Wood with traces of pigment; 31 1/8 in (79.0 cm)
Gift of E. Sham; M.81.146

The shrine is quite typically Nepali and consists of a base supporting two columns from which springs an elaborate arch or *torana*. At the front corners of the base are two menacing lions, and in the middle of the base is a pot with foliage, which is set against an overhanging carpet. The libation pipe would have

been inserted through the hole of the pot. At either end of the arch are two *makaras* whose swirling tails fill parts of the arch. At the apex is the grinning face of a stylized lion. The lion is busy swallowing two snakes, and rather unusually, he has two wings. Garuda, the traditional enemy of snakes, is more commonly encountered at the apex of such arches.

Although the form and features of this Bhairava are no different from some of his other representations (S56, S59), he has fewer arms here and some of the attributes differ. Rather than being trampled, his human mount seems to carry his lord as he assumes a flying posture as does Garuda in images of Vishnu (S1). The two principal hands of Bhairava hold the chopper and skull-cup as does the Buddhist Mahakala. With his other two right hands he holds the rosary and kettledrum. One of his left hands is broken, and the attribute in the other is indistinct. Seated near his feet on either side are a male and female, who form the adoration gesture with their hands. Very likely they represent the donors.

S59 *Miniature Bhairava Shrine*



S59 *Miniature Bhairava Shrine*
C. 1750
Copper alloy with gilt; 4 7/8 in (12.4 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund; M.77.7.2

This miniature shrine of Bhairava probably graced a domestic altar. As in the large bronze (S56), the god has eighteen arms and carries the same attributes, although they are distributed with slight variation. Otherwise, however, the representation differs considerably.

Bhairava is placed in the middle of a trough on a rectangular pedestal. The five heads of the seated god are arranged in a pyramid. His mount, the dog, is seated in front of his master. In addition, a *makara* spout (see S4) is attached to the front of the pedestal. Consecrated liquid was dispensed from this spout.

The image of Bhairava is made in repoussé, while the spout, dog, and pedestal were individually cast. By comparing this *makara* spout with the Lichchhavi terra-cotta example, the remarkable continuity of Nepali religious and artistic traditions can be discerned.

S60 *Bhairava Head*



S60 *Bhairava Head*
Patan or Thimi; c. 1750
Terra-cotta; 11 1/2 in (29.2 cm)
Anonymous donor; M.81.210

An ancient Hindu god, Bhairava is the angry manifestation of Siva. His name literally means "terrible" or "frightful," and he is a much dreaded god appeased by both Hindus and Buddhists. The Buddhists worship him as Mahakala (great time), and his shrines are visited by both Nepali Hindus and Buddhists. Bhairava's images comprise full figures (S56, S58) or simply masklike heads, as in this example. Such heads are usually made of wood, metal, or terra-cotta. The color and type of clay used for this head indicate that it may have been made in the same workshop that produced the *mahasiddha* (S48).

Bhairava's flying hair frames the god's face, a typical element in such heads. Skulls form his tiara and snakes, his earrings. His rotund, puffed face is made menacing with three circular eyes, eyebrows and moustache formed with stylized flame motifs, and fangs sticking out of his open mouth, through which a pipe was inserted to serve consecrated beer (see S56). The only major damage to the piece has occurred on the nose.

S61 *Vishnu Adored by Serpents*
1750–1800
Ivory with traces of pigment; 2 3/4 x 3 1/8 in (6.9 x 7.9 cm)
Gift of Corky Whitaker; M.83.218.1
Literature: Pal 1981, p. 93.

The exact function of this delicately carved ivory object has not been determined. It may have formed the back of a small throne or some other furnishing used in a domestic shrine. It is carved on both sides with an identical design.

The base from which the arch springs is decorated with two rows of floral designs. The bottom row contains lotus petals, the upper row comprises a meandering vine enclosing flowers. The arch is formed with the intertwined bodies of four serpents with heads at each end. Between the arch and base are placed the figures of the god Vishnu—framed by an aureole of intertwining multihooded serpents—and two adoring serpent kings. The crowned and garlanded Vishnu stands rigidly and holds with his four hands the lotus, wheel, club, and conch. The two serpent kings are portrayed as half-human, half-serpent. Each wears a tiara and a coat of mail and is protected by a snake hood. Each is busy fanning Vishnu with a flywhisk in one hand while holding a wheel with the other hand.

Most of the figures are carved in the round. Consequently, the elaborate design, dominated by an abundance of twisted and convoluted serpentine forms, appears light and animated. The artist has successfully contrasted the firm stability of the deity with the rhythmic flux of the universe around him.

Front



Back



S62 Uma-Mahesvara
1750–1800
Stone; 19 in (48.3 cm)
Gift of Gary Crawford; M.83.248.2



Siva is seated in the relaxed posture of royal ease on a lotus springing from a curved base. His wife Uma is seated on his left thigh with her left leg placed upon the shoulder of her winged lion. Siva's mount, the bull, is represented on the other side of the stele. Siva wears his usual snake ornaments, skulls, garland, and crown. His plump face is distinguished by two circular staring eyes and a moustache. An unusual feature is a conelike object projecting above his right ear; this may be the datura flower, which is sacred to Siva. One of Siva's right hands is held against his chest and forms the teaching gesture; the second right hand grasps the rosary. In each of the two left hands is the trident and waterpot. Adorned with various ornaments, the smaller figure of Uma holds the stem of the blue lotus with her left hand and displays the gesture of charity with her right.

As is usual in such reliefs, the outline of the sculpture is ornamented with bead and flame motifs. Less elaborate than the other near-contemporary image in the collection (S51), the two principal figures are given greater prominence. The image also differs iconographically. Siva here holds the rosary instead of the kettledrum and the waterpot instead of his wife's breast. Both these emblems and gestures continue the iconographic tradition of the much earlier relief (S8). Siva's moustache and the datura flower are not commonly represented in earlier images of Siva in Nepal.

S63 *Durga Slaying the Buffalo Demon*
1750–1800
Schist; 18 5/8 in (47.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim; M.70.42.7

Against a plain nimbus with a stylized flame border, the goddess Durga stands in a militant posture pressing the head of the buffalo whose tail she holds with one of her left hands. A skirtlike garment drapes the lower portion of her body. On her bare torso and arms she wears only ornaments. A garland of severed heads graces her shoulders and her matted hair is embellished with a tiara. In addition, two flags stick out of either side of her head and a lotus emerges from her elaborate coiffure. Her eighteen arms hold various weapons with which she fights the demon Mahishasura, who had assumed the form of a buffalo during his fatal duel with the goddess. This battle forms the central theme of the *Devimahatmya*, the most important religious text for devotees of the Great Goddess. The two donors kneel reverently along the base of the stele.

Such reliefs were quite commonly dedicated during the Late Malla and Shah periods and are frequently encountered in the three principal towns of the Kathmandu Valley: Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Patan. They were not only worshiped in a shrine but were also set up ex-voto near a temple or water fountain or in a courtyard and generally received offerings from passersby. The iconography of such images differs considerably as is evident from a comparison with a similar image in the collection (S64). This particular composition of the goddess holding the buffalo by the tail and the demon shown as an animal (rather than emerging from an animal) is an archaic survival of a formula current in India during or before the Gupta period.



S64 *Durga Slaying the Buffalo Demon*
1750–1800
Schist; 20 in (50.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim; M.70.42.8
Literature: Glynn 1972, fig. 23



In this second version of the theme (see S63), the tableau is depicted in a more conventional form. Not only is the goddess accompanied by her lion mount, on whose back she places her right foot, but the demon, crowned and armored, emerges in his human form from the severed neck of the buffalo to receive the thrust of Durga's spear on his chest. Characteristic of Nepali images of the Great Goddess, her two principal hands hold the cup and display the gesture of exposition against her chest (see S45, P9). Thus, it is possible that the goddess here is one of the Nine Durgas (Navadurgas), who are especially venerated in Nepal, rather than simply the destroyer of the buffalo demon (see P9 for the concept of the Navadurga). Significantly also, the goddess uses the spear rather than the usual trident to slay the demon, and this too may indicate that one of the Navadurgas is intended here.

The aesthetic differences between the two examples are slight and subtle. Apart from the fact that the goddess's right leg here is bent, the figure seems somewhat more animated because of the tilt of the body and head. Noteworthy also is the variation in the disposition of the eighteen arms, which are distributed in two planes. Also, by cutting away some of the aureole, the artist has emphasized the articulation of the figure. The placement of the tableau on a lotus base makes it a more hieratic representation, whereas, in the other image, the drama of the duel is made more emphatic by the unfinished surface of the pedestal.





S65 *Chakrasamvara and Vajravarahi in Union*
Dated 1772
Copper alloy with gilt; 16 1/4 in (41.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Alston Callahan; M.80.110

The iconography of this image is more elaborate than the stone version (S46) and is very similar to the principal group in the fifteenth-century painting (P13). As in the painting, the god has twelve arms and is engaged in a casual embrace with the goddess Vajravarahi. The iconographic differences between these two representations are minor. Instead of clasping the god with both legs, here the goddess has only her right leg thrown around him. The attributes are identical, although they are not disposed in the same manner. Beginning with the upper left, the attributes are the elephant skin, skull-cup, cot's leg, rope, heads of Brahma, bell, thunderbolt, trident, battleax, kettledrum, chopper, and elephant foot. The fourth head of Samvara is shown on the back of the bronze and is regaled in similar ornaments and garland. The tiger's skin is not shown in the bronze; a sash tied around the waist unfurls like a festoon on either side of the figure. But for her posture, Vajravarahi is identical to the painted version. Below their feet are Kalaratri and Mahakala, whose bodies are not as contorted as in the two earlier representations.

The inscription at the base identifies the figures as the god Chakrasamvara and goddess Vajravarahi, who are extolled in a poorly constructed Sanskrit and Newari verse (see Appendix). The inscription states that the sculpture was dedicated in the year N.S. 892, corresponding to the year A.D. 1772. The fact that the principal deity is called Chakrasamvara rather than simply Samvara implies that the tradition followed here was that of the *Chakrasamvaratantra*, an important text of tantric Buddhism. The goddess holds the chopper with her right hand rather than the thunderbolt. This identifies her as Vasya-Vajravarahi, a special form of the goddess who is invoked in rites involving the bewitching of men and women (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 219).

S66 *A Commemorative Stupa*



S66 *A Commemorative Stupa*
1775–1800
Copper with gilt; 5 3/4 in (14.6 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund; M.77.7.1

The most ancient of all Buddhist symbols, the stupa serves various functions in Buddhist art and ritual. This particular example was dedicated to commemorate the Bhimaratha, a rite of passage observed primarily by Newari Buddhists (Pal 1977). It is performed when a man or woman reaches the age of seventy-seven years, seven months, and seven days. The rite releases the performer from the responsibility of having to observe any religious functions until his or her death. It is also believed that after the observance of the ritual the performer enters the realm of senility and is no longer morally responsible for his actions. The Newars perform this rite with great pomp and ceremony and usually commemorate the occasion by dedicating a painting depicting the goddess Ushnishavijaya within a stupa.

In this example the stupa is placed on a high pedestal on the front of which is attached the portrait of the donor riding a chariot drawn by three horses. Invariably in such representations, the performer is shown riding a chariot, presumably symbolizing his journey after death to the Western Paradise of the Buddha Amitabha. Attached to the circular body of the stupa itself is the effigy of the goddess Ushnishavijaya, who is also supplicated for immortality. The superstructure of the stupa consists of a spire of thirteen rings symbolizing the thirteen stages of enlightenment. The spire is sheltered by a parasol to which are attached festive streamers and crowned by the vase of immortality.

The stupa may have graced the domestic shrine in the donor's family, or it may have been dedicated to a monastery. It was very likely cast in the last quarter of the eighteenth century for it is remarkably similar to another stupa in a private collection dedicated in the year 1780 (Pal 1977, p. 180, fig. 4).



S67 *Bracket with the Goddess Mahesvari*
1775–1800
Wood; 40 1/2 in (102.8 cm)
Gift of Professor and Mrs. Thomas O. Ballinger;
M.84.39.2

This bracket is a characteristic example of a type found in a typical Nepali wood temple. The base of the bracket is carved with stylized rock designs. From this rocky base rise a lotus flower with leaves and two tree trunks along the sides. Above the lotus is a bull looking up at the divine figure dancing on his back. This figure represents Mahesvari, one of the Mother Goddesses. Adorned with a garland of skulls, her principal hands are held against her bosom. The right hand holds the skull-cup, and the left hand displays the teaching gesture. The upper right hand holds the rosary, and the upper left hand holds the trident. Two flags stick out of either side of her head, above which are the leaves and flowers of the tree.

The figure is stylistically similar to the Durga image (S64). The faces of both figures are almost identical, and their forms are similarly modeled and proportioned. The details of the ornaments, however, are less well finished in this wood figure.



S68 *The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara with Two Attendants*
Dated 1817
Copper with gilt and turquoise; 20 1/8 in (51.1 cm)
Gift of Anthony A. Manheim; M.81.205.1

Despite the absence of the lotus in his left hand and the presence of the stupa above his head, the central figure can be identified as the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara by the inscription on the back of the base. The inscription states that the image was dedicated by Tuladharasimha and his wife in the year N.S. 937, corresponding to A.D. 1817, to commemorate the celebration of the Bhimaratha rite. The sculpture also served as a sort of memorial in honor of Dhanavirasimha, Tejadakasimha, and Dayadakasimha, the two nephews and grandson of Tuladhara. The two kneeling attendant deities are said to be effigies of two of the deceased relatives. Dayadaka is identified with Hayagriva on Avalokitesvara's left and Dhanavira, with Suryadhanakubera. Usually the two male companions of Avalokitesvara are Hayagriva and Sudhanakumara, who is generally depicted with his hands clasped in the gesture of adoration with the book under his arm, as the youthful figure here demonstrates. Suryadhanakubera is a strange name. Hayagriva (the horse-headed one) can be identified by the horse's head emerging from his head.

Crowned and ornamented, Avalokitesvara wears a deerskin slung over his left shoulder. Behind his crown is the seated figure of the Buddha Amitabha. An ornate aureole and nimbus decorated with vegetal motifs surround the standing bodhisattva. A small stupa with the inset figure of the goddess Ushnishavijaya, who also is mentioned in the inscription, is attached to the apex. In objects commemorating the Bhimaratha rite (see S66), the principal image usually is a stupa with the figure of Ushnishavijaya. The association of the stupa with Avalokitesvara, however, is unusual although not unknown in Nepal (see P8). Moreover, in a special manifestation, known curiously as Ushnishavijaya, Avalokitesvara is said to display the stupa on his crown (D. C. Bhattacharyya 1974, p. 23).

The sculpture is an impressive assemblage of several sections cast separately. The figure of Avalokitesvara, however, is awkward and lacks the graceful proportions of earlier representations. Considerable Tibetan influence is perceptible both in the treatment of the garment flaps along Avalokitesvara's legs and exuberant decoration of the surrounding aureole.



S69 A Necklace for the Living Goddess
Nineteenth century
Gold and copper alloy with gilt and semiprecious stones; 13 1/2 in (34.3 cm)
Gift of Mrs. F. Daniel Frost; M.79.242

This beautifully designed necklace is typically Newari and is worn by divine as well as mortal persons. Such a necklace is often included in the trousseau of a Newari bride and is also worn by the living virgin goddess in her celebrated temple in Kathmandu (Slusser 1982, 2: pl. 521).

The necklace consists of a solid ovoid pendant to which is attached a section consisting of two paisley- or mango-shaped turquoises in between the sun and moon symbols and thirteen rearing cobras above. The crescent is formed with a crystal and the disc, with a turquoise. From the mouths of the serpents hang drops of coral. Dancing peacocks decorate two arms of the necklace, which rise on either side of this device. The dancing peacock was a favorite decorative motif in the valley, and some of the finest examples can be seen in Malla-period carved windows in Bhaktapur. The circular clasp is decorated with a dragon surrounded by lotus petals.

Some motifs adorning the necklace were selected not simply for aesthetic reasons but also for their symbolic significance. The mango, a favorite fruit in India, is a symbol of fertility—a particularly appropriate motif for a bridal necklace. The dragon and *nagas* are also symbols of fertility and good fortune. The peacock is a bird sacred to Kumara and also to Kumari or Kaumari, one of the Eight Mothers, who are collectively worshiped for safe childbirth and the protection of children. Thus, since Kumari is the designation for the living virgin goddess, it is fitting that her necklace should be decorated with a peacock.



Detail

S70 Relief with Figures
Nineteenth century
Wood with traces of vermilion; 5 1/8 x 37 3/8 in (13.0 x 94.9 cm)
Gift of Professor and Mrs. Thomas O. Ballinger; M.84.39.1

This rectangular piece of wood may have served as a lintel in a small shrine. In the center is a fairly deep niche containing nine seated figures, six male and three female. The names of the figures are carved along the bottom, and in some instances their relationship to the donor, who is not included, and to each other is given. For example, the first figure is identified as the fifth son and the accompanying female as his wife.

Although they are intended to be portraits, no attempt is made to distinguish each figure. All the males are identical as are all the females. Each has his or her hands held against the chest in the gesture of adoration. Traces of vermilion powder still adhere to the relief, testifying to the devotion of the figures' descendants.



S71 *Temple Lamp*
Late nineteenth century
Brass and copper alloy; 29 1/8 in (73.7 cm)
Julian C. Wright Bequest; M.79.152.50a–b

This is a typical example of a type of lamp frequently encountered in Nepali temples, both Hindu and Buddhist. This particular example was used in a Buddhist shrine. Made of brass and copper, such lamps are often elaborate and consist of several parts. The stand is in the shape of an hourglass and is richly decorated with stylized floral motifs. The shoulders, which are as wide as the flaring base, support a shallow copper dish for the oil and wick. Handsomely shaped metal leaves hang like tassels along the rim of the flaring top. On one side of the copper dish is attached a small shrine complete with elaborate aureole.

The principal figure in this shrine is Chintamani Lokesvara or Lokesvara with the Wishing Gem (see S36). He stands below a wish-fulfilling tree in the posture characteristic of the Hindu god Krishna. His right hand holds a wreath and his left hand, a leafy tree branch. He is accompanied by two goddesses, who stand on either side of him, and several gnomelike attendants (yakshas), who are busily collecting gems falling from the tree. Two of these figures have animal heads. A pair of birds and monkeys inhabit the celestial tree.

Drawings: Model-books and Manuals



Ordinary people are attracted by colors,
Women are charmed by ornamentation,
Connoisseurs prefer the brushwork,
But the masters admire the line.

Vishnudharmottarapurana
(fourth–seventh century)[1]

Introduction

The museum's collection of artists' model-books and priests' manuals forms the largest and most extensive group of such material in the world. The earliest drawings that have survived in India date to the seventeenth century, but the museum's collection includes drawings and sketches as old as the fifteenth century. Not only does the material increase the understanding of certain technical aspects of the artistic process in Nepal, but it is also of great interest to students of iconography, both Hindu and Buddhist. The sketches further demonstrate the breadth of the Nepali artist's repertoire, which can not be discerned by study of surviving sculptures and paintings alone. Some sketchbooks contain more than one hundred figures, and even a simple description of each subject would require a book as large as this entire volume. Many books also contain lengthy texts in Sanskrit and Newari. Thus, for the present, the discussion must be limited.

With one or two exceptions, most drawings and sketches were executed in books known as *thyasaphu*. The Newari term strictly means "historical chronicle," but because most such chronicles were written on folding books, it is also used generically to denote the type of book itself. A *thyasaphu* consists of several folios of locally made paper glued together. Each folio follows the shape of the palm leaf but is shorter and somewhat wider. On the average, a folio is 2½ to 5 inches high and 6 to 8 inches wide. Some, however, are much larger. The folios are stitched or glued lengthwise along the edges to form a book that opens and closes like the bellows of a concertina. Although paper was introduced into Nepal from Tibet, this type of folding book appears to be a local invention.

While a few books are complete, most are not. Their condition varies considerably. Some are badly damaged, and many are worm eaten or frayed along the edges. Most paper retains a natural beige color and rough, uneven surface. In a few instances, however, the paper was dyed yellow, and only one or two were primed with white before the sketches were drawn. More commonly, both the sketches and text are rendered in black ink; occasionally, the black outlines were fortified with red ink and sometimes the outlines were drawn in red. Most drawings made in red have faded and are at times scarcely visible. Some forms, especially of mandalas (D17) and designs for masks (D31), are fully colored. Other sketches contain faint color notations or delicately applied pigments.

Seldom is a book given over to drawings completely, although there are books in Nepal known as *kalāpustaka* containing only pictures.[2] Various kinds of text are included in the books, some pertain to the drawings and others do not. Some appear to be priests' manuals containing descriptions of various rituals, postures, gestures, and other elements related to worship. Others contain information regarding iconometry and proportions and notations and instructions about the colors of the various deities and other iconographic forms. Sometimes labels are added to identify a drawing. A few books contain

eulogies and descriptions of the deities written in Sanskrit, and some are astrological works. One book contains drawings devoted to architecture and related rituals, some include devotional poems, while one or two provide interesting historical information. It will not be possible to discuss all the textual matter in the books, but a few comments about the more interesting texts are appropriate.

A document important both for the political and art history of Nepal is a fifteenth-century book (D2) prepared in Bhaktapur, the capital of the country during the rule of Yakshamalla (c. 1428–82). Written in Newari, the text describes various celebrations surrounding the birth of a prince. It is said that the king dedicated a Sivalinga and performed a religious ceremony, known as Tūlāpurushadāna, in which gold equal to the weight of the infant prince was given to brahmins. As part of the jubilation, a dance-drama based on the *Ramayana* was organized, which in fact occasioned the artist to make the sketches.

Another book of historical interest is D6. It was apparently prepared between 1597 and 1619, when Sivasimhamalla, ruler of Kathmandu, annexed the kingdom of Patan and installed his son Hariharasimha as governor there. The somewhat damaged and incomplete book should be of particular interest to students of literature for it contains many poems and songs about the life of Krishna written in mixed Sanskrit and Newari. Interesting material related to the history of Nepali literature can also be found in at least two other books (D9 and D11). Both manuscripts contain eulogies composed in Sanskrit and Newari by Newari priests and dedicated to Buddhist deities. The Sanskrit eulogies in D9 are well written and demonstrate that the author, Srimantadeva (active c. 1650), was an accomplished Sanskritist.

Three distinct scripts are recognizable in these sketchbooks. A few fifteenth-century books are written in Bhujimol script. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Devanagari script became popular. Most books are written in Newari script. All three types are derived from the more ancient Brahmi script. Within these three broad styles, each reveals the distinct mannerisms of individual scribes. The quality of writing also varies considerably from one book to another. Some obviously wrote their texts carefully and wielded their pens with assurance. Others were less concerned with style and elegance and wrote in a more cursory manner. Although only a few sketchbooks are dated, there are so many dated manuscripts from the period that dates can be assigned to books without colophons based on a comparative analysis of the style of writing and drawing.

Only one sketchbook (D10) in the collection identifies the names of the two artists who made it. Their names are incorrectly given as Endraraja and Jugideva (Indraraja and Jogideva). No other information is furnished about them. Another name, Srimantadeva, occurs in the colophon of the fascinating book prepared in Lhasa in 1652/53 (D9), but it is not known whether Srimantadeva was the artist. Srimantadeva described himself as a *vajracharya*, and it is not improbable that he was responsible for the sketches. Because the drawings are so characteristically Tibetan and contain identification labels in Tibetan, it is equally probable that they were made by a Tibetan artist. An earlier book of sketches was published a few years ago that was also prepared in Tibet by a Newari artist.[3] The artist responsible for that book, Jivarama, does not characterize himself as a *vajracharya* but does admit that he consulted a local artist or monk. In Jivarama's book the drawings are rendered in a strongly Tibetan style and the subjects relate to Tibetan rather than Nepali art. It is thus possible that in like manner Srimantadeva was also responsible for the drawings in the museum's sketchbook but relied on a Tibetan consultant. No other document has survived from Nepal that indicates that the *vajracharyas* knew how to draw or paint, but certainly they were accomplished scribes. Buddhist monks in India, Tibet, and other countries were often excellent amateur artists, and there is no reason to believe that some monks and *vajracharyas* in Nepal also did not follow the same practice.

In general, however, most sketchbooks must have been made by professional artists. It seems unlikely that they also wrote the text since professional artists did not belong to the higher castes and would have had little or no learning. That professional artists were involved in the preparation of these sketchbooks is evident from the fact that many contain sketches of both Hindu and Buddhist subjects (D8, D21, D24, D28). Or again, we do not know the name of the artist responsible for the fifteenth-century sketchbooks with drawings from the *Ramayana* (D2), but the possibility that the sketches were based on models brought from Mithila indicate that the artist must have been a professional. The sketches were obviously meant to be used as models for paintings. Likewise, Indraraja and Jogideva (D10) must also have made their preparatory sketches of *ragamalas* and *mahasiddhas* as models or aide-mémoire for commissioned pictures of these subjects. This further indicates that Srimantadeva may have been an artist himself, for the sketches made in Lhasa were clearly meant to be used in an artist's model-book rather than in a priest's manual. If he were not an artist, then it may be assumed that he acquired the drawings so that professional artists in Nepal could paint Tibetan-style *thankas* (religious paintings on cloth), which he then traded in Tibet. In any event, some sketchbooks belonged to artists' families, while others (D13, D17, D25)—especially those containing drawings of gestures, postures, mandalas, and *yantras* (geometric drawings used in rituals), most of which were used by Buddhists—probably belonged to *vajracharyas* who used them during their own religious ceremonies or to guide professional artists. The various gestures and designs for mandalas and other religious diagrams are seldom encountered in paintings or sculptures.

A vast array of subjects is depicted in these sketchbooks. The majority represent images of Hindu and Buddhist deities, predominantly female. While some of the deities are worshiped commonly in the Kathmandu Valley, others belong to the Tibetan pantheon. Drawings were purely iconographic, consisting simply of a divine figure with all of his or her ornaments and attributes. Only a few sketches are of complete pictorial compositions. One or two sketches on loose sheets (D14–16) may have been intended to be finished paintings. It will not be possible to analyze the iconography of the numerous deities represented in the sketchbooks, but a few interesting examples will be discussed.

The two representations of Manavinayaka and Ghantakarna in a sketchbook rendered around 1600 (D8) are among the most unusual. A patron deity of the Kathmandu Valley, Manavinayaka is a form of Ganesa. Ghantakarna is a form of Karttikeya. Although he is familiar in Indian religious literature, he is rarely depicted in Indian art. According to Slusser, the cult of Ghantakarna is of some significance in the valley.[4] Both deities are shown dancing gracefully on their respective mounts in typically Nepali iconographic form. Manavinayaka seems to have eight heads and Ghantakarna six, making his identification with Karttikeya unquestioned. A curious feature of Manavinayaka is that his eight heads representing the eight directions are protected by a multihooded serpent canopy. The representation in this sketchbook of Natyesvara, the dancing Siva, is also interesting. It closely resembles in style and iconography the rare lithic representation of the deity in the collection (S49).

The beautiful sketches of the Mother Goddess Indrani and Bhairava (D14–15) are particularly noteworthy. As is customary, the goddess is shown holding a skull-cup with her left hand, but it is rare to see her seated on a skull-cup as well. Bhairava's identification with Mahakala is apparent not only because of the presence of the two attributes—the thunderbolt crowned chopper and skull-cup held in his principal hands—but also by their disposition. He holds another specifically Buddhist emblem in one of his upper right hands: the double-diamond (*visvavajra*). Noteworthy also is the nude figure below his feet who is drinking from a skull-cup; the figure is usually shown as a corpse.

Among the most fascinating sketches are those depicting various cosmic forms of the Great Goddess. In one example (D16), where only part of her name survives as Kali (possibly Maha- or Ugra-kali), she sits on her spouse, Bhairava/Mahakala, and holds a skeleton with her left hand. To my knowledge, this emblem of Kali, or for that matter this particular form, is not encountered in Indian art. Another intriguing representation of a cosmic form of the Great Goddess occurs in a late-nineteenth-century book (D28), one of the most interesting iconographic documents in the collection. The goddess is portrayed with one thousand arms, the distribution and composition of which clearly reflect the influence of images of the Buddhist cosmic goddess Ushṇīshasitātapatrā. Unlike her, the Hindu goddess does not have one thousand heads and carries no emblems or weapons. Instead, in each of her hands is a tiny seated human figure with hands clasped in adoration of the deity. At the bottom of the sketch stands Siva, also engaged in adoring the cosmic manifestation. This particular sketchbook contains other fascinating iconographic drawings as well, including a duel between Karttikeya and Narasimha, an avatar of Vishnu, the exact significance of which is not known.

Two sketchbooks in the collection contain illustrations of hand gestures used largely in Hindu tantric rituals. Both books are incomplete. The earlier (D3) consists of only three folios, while the other (D27) contains thirty-two folios and a long text called *Mudrāprakaraṇa* (manifestation of gestures). The text, however, does not discuss the gestures but extols Vishnu and his incarnations and furnishes much cosmological and geographical information about the Indian subcontinent and its peoples and languages. The gestures seem to be those used for tantric worship, particularly of the goddess and her emanations, the *yoginis*. All the gestures in D27 are clearly identified. Some gestures in D3 are simply identified with mantras, while others are associated with particular deities, only two of whom are named. Evidently, however, these gestures were also meant for use primarily in tantric rituals.

Representations of Buddhist gods and goddesses are numerous, and only a few examples will be discussed here. A particularly rare sketch portrays the esoteric deity Kalachakra embracing his spouse Viśvamātā, or Universal Mother (D8a). Representations of Kalachakra, the presiding deity of the *Kalachakratantra* are rare in Nepali art. The cult was especially arcane, and images were seldom shown to the uninitiated. In this illustration the deities are trampling Kamadeva (Hindu god of desire) and his spouse Rati as well as Isvara, or Siva, and his spouse. The image basically follows the description contained in standard iconographic texts.

The richest sketchbook of Buddhist iconography (D19) contains many illustrations of well-known divinities, including two most unusual images of Manjusri emphasizing his cosmic dimension. In another sketchbook (D25) four stupas are illustrated. Curiously, four stupas associated with the four Hindu castes—brahmin, *kshatriya*, *vaisya*, and *sudra*—are included in the text, even though these caste divisions do not apply to Buddhists. Other interesting material for the study of Buddhist art and ritual is contained in a book illustrating postures and gestures (D11). These sketches are undoubtedly meant to help priests perform rituals correctly rather than aid artists. With one or two exceptions, most figures are male deities. Also, only one figure, in the center of the upper folio, is multiarmed. If these are representations of specific deities, then they are not known from any paintings. Curiously, most figures hold the thunderbolt and bell, the two most frequently used implements in Buddhist ritual. A few display no attributes, and in one or two instances, the thunderbolt is replaced by a sword. The figures are neatly drawn, and the gestures and postures are clearly articulated, although, unfortunately, identifying labels have not been attached.

Several sketchbooks contain representations of various iconographic forms and architectural designs that are patently Tibetan and not generally encountered in Nepali sculpture or painting. Most common among these are the Buddhist regents of the four

directions known as Dhritarashtra (East), Vaisravana (North), Virudhaka (South), and Virupaksha (West). The figures are attired in Central Asian or Mongolian costumes with distinctive crowns, cuirasses, and boots (D12, D22). Srimantadeva's sketchbook (D9), rendered in Lhasa in 1652/53, is one of the richest documents of its kind. In addition to containing images of deities, it includes landscape compositions, various motifs, and architectural details employed only in Tibetan art. An eighteenth-century book contains roughly sketched images of deities and interesting studies of monks, both idealized and realistically rendered (D20). Also included are spontaneous and animated drawings of birds, dragons, animals, dancing divinities, and plants. These books with their Tibetan iconographic patterns leave no doubt that Tibetan-style pictures and bronzes were in brisk demand in the Kathmandu Valley.

Representations of *mahasiddas* are rarely encountered in Nepali art. Apart from a drawing (D10), the collection also contains a terra-cotta relief portraying a *mahasiddha* (S48). *Mahasiddhas* are a group of historical personages who lived in India between the seventh and eleventh centuries. They were unconventional people who did not follow accepted social or religious norms and were mystically oriented. Some were erudite scholars, others were poets, and some had no formal education of any kind. *Mahasiddhas* were venerated by both Buddhists and Hindus, especially by Saiva yogis. Buddhists believed in a group of eighty-four *mahasiddhas*. The *mahasiddhas* became extremely popular in Tibet, where they are frequently represented in art. In Nepal a few *mahasiddhas*, such as Gorakhnāth and especially Matsyendranāth, became the focus of local cults.[5] There is little evidence of such a cult in India. Isolated representations are included in some paintings (P13), but by and large, except for the museum's terra-cotta and sketches, collective representations of the eighty-four *mahasiddhas* are virtually unknown. The sketchbook of Indraraja and Jogideva, prepared in Kathmandu in 1674, is therefore of great importance for this subject. The fifty-three of the eighty-four *mahasiddhas* represented in this sketchbook comprise the largest group known in Nepali art. Each *mahasiddha* is identified by inscription, and, interestingly, each is accompanied by a female partner. It is also significant that the figural types and iconography differ considerably from Tibetan representations of the *mahasiddhas*.

Several narrative subjects are depicted in the sketchbooks in a wide variety of styles. The earliest are the compositions for the *Ramayana* in the fifteenth-century book containing historical material about King Yakshamalla (D2). The figures are generally tall, slender, and well proportioned. The outlines are crisp and fluent. The compositions are continuous, with scenes divided by trees, and no element obscures the narrative action. Interestingly, the same figural scheme is used to represent with subtle modification human and divine heroes, monkeys and demons. Monkeys are most clearly recognizable by their simian faces, large feet, and tails, when visible. Above their tiaras, which are no different from those crowning divine figures, is a semicircular design of short, raylike strokes.

Another narrative theme represented in the collection is the story of the Hindu god Krishna (D6). Compositionally these vigorously rendered sketches made around 1600 by an unknown artist are somewhat more elaborate but less finished than the fifteenth-century *Ramayana* drawings. All the characters are faceless, and these rapidly executed sketches were doubtlessly meant to serve as artists' models. As in the earlier drawings, trees divide one scene from another, but architectural devices also serve the same purpose. Kamsa, the anti-hero of the story, and his followers are distinguished by a headgear similar to that worn by the monkeys and demons in the *Ramayana* sketches. This particular headgear seems to follow the design of a type of ceremonial hat worn by the lamas (high monks) in Lhasa. It is frequently used in Nepali narrative paintings to distinguish villains and demons, which seems rather strange considering the veneration shown otherwise by the Newars for Tibetan lamas. These drawings of the *Bhagavatapurana* are among the earliest surviving

representations of the theme in Nepal. Interestingly, the male figures in these sketches are dressed in the conventional Nepali mode, the gods wearing dhotis and the demons wearing, in addition to the dhoti, a short-sleeved, tight-fitting shirt. By the mid-seventeenth century, as known from other examples of narrative paintings and the Buddhist scroll in the collection (P34), it became customary to depict males wearing Mughal and Rajput attire.

The contemporary mode of dress adopted for the representation of some figures in paintings is also found in a late-nineteenth-century sketchbook (D30). In a representation of the early life of the Buddha, the gods retain their dhotis, the women continue to wear saris—although in the contemporary Indian fashion—and the princes and their attendants are clad in the manner prevalent in the Nepali court of the period. Noteworthy also is the fact that the compositions of the various scenes are much more elaborate here than in either the *Ramayana* or Krishna sketches. The architecture and landscaping is much richer and a greater sense of depth is achieved (cf. P34). Mountains and trees are drawn with conviction and do not follow the formulaic representations of earlier paintings. Rather, they clearly reveal the artist's cursory familiarity with European drawing.

The collection also includes representations of another theme, although it is not directly related to religion or mythology. Two sketchbooks in the collection illustrate *ragamalas* (garlands of musical modes) of the seventeenth (D10) and late nineteenth (D29) centuries. The earlier manuscript is the more complete and contains representations of the six ragas (basic musical modes) and thirty-six *raginis* (variations). No distinction, however, is made in the accompanying labels in which each representation is identified as a raga. The exact tradition on which the artist based his work is unknown, but the pictures generally follow the iconographic modes prevalent in Rajasthan and central India rather than in the hills of Panjab and Himachal Pradesh. The iconography basically agrees with a complete series of *ragamala* paintings made probably in Bhaktapur around 1650, but the compositions in this series are much more simplified and the drawing is not as fine.[6] A comparison of these two *ragamala* representations clearly shows that Newari artists did not blindly imitate other forms but introduced their own iconographic elements. Several compositions differ considerably from the Indian *ragamala* pictures. For instance, the Mallara raga (D10b) is shown as an emaciated, ascetic figure walking in the rain, an iconography not encountered in Indian representations, while the Jati raga, which is rarely illustrated in Indian *ragamala* series, is depicted as a woman offering pomegranates to her pet parrot. But this and the composition of the submissive lover (D10b, upper right), which depicts the Ramakari *ragini*, are more commonly used in India in pictures of rhetorical themes rather than in *ragamala* representations. The late-nineteenth-century series (D29) has only a few compositions, some incomplete and others without labels. Some of the same ragas, however, relate to different iconographies. For instance, the Mallara raga (here called Meghamallara) shows a swordsman instead of an emaciated figure. Moreover, several labels indicate that, if complete, this would have been a more elaborate series than the seventeenth-century *ragamala*. Besides ragas and *raginis*, the series also includes *ragaputras* (sons of ragas), further variations upon a musical theme.

A majority of books contain sketches used by generations of artists as models or exemplars; other books served as manuals for priestly rituals. Although drawing has been admired by Indian theoreticians from very early times as the epigraph at the beginning of the Introduction attests, not until the reign of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–28) was drawing appreciated in the Indic tradition as an independent art form. The situation in both India and Nepal therefore was to some extent akin to that which prevailed in medieval Europe, where drawings generally served a practical purpose and were meant to be used by members of the artist's family as visual models for a painting or sculpture. While medieval European patrons appreciated outline illustrations for their manuscripts, in India as well as

Nepal the finished product was invariably filled with colors, and it is doubtful that any of the books included here was ever seen by a patron. The drawings were meant only to serve as patterns for the artist, and their purpose was practical rather than aesthetic.

Most drawings in the model-books were executed according to conventional formulae, whether of individual figures, architectural elements, or pictorial compositions for narrative paintings. In medieval European model-books, sketches were "not original inventions but copies of standard types, and the common property of the artist and his associates."[7] No drawing is the result of direct observation from nature but is derived from other works of art, both native and imported. For instance, notes written on a fifteenth-century book (D2) clearly indicate that the artist had based his sketches of the Hindu epic *Ramayana* on palm leaf models brought from Mithila. Or again, several books (D9, D12, D20) contain drawings derived from Tibetan paintings, while the seventeenth-century artists Indraraja and Jogideva (D10) adopted their brief compositions for *ragamala* pictures clearly from contemporary Indian paintings of this popular theme.

That these drawings served largely as artists' models rather than preparatory sketches for finished paintings is supported by several facts. For instance, some books, most notably the earliest in the collection (D1), contain drawings and sketches arbitrarily juxtaposed on the same folio. In others (D7, D19, D22) only parts of designs and ornaments are drawn, while at least in one book (D6) only the outlines of the figures and the compositions have been sketched. In still others (D8) emblems held in the hands are so perfunctorily rendered as to be scarcely recognizable, which is no doubt why the artist has labeled the figures and emblems. Moreover, in some instances, color notations are also added, further indicating that the drawings were meant to serve as artistic exemplars. In at least one instance (D20), the drawings were sketched on very thin transparent paper, as if they were meant to be used for tracing but were then pasted in a book, no doubt to give them greater permanence. Both in this, and in some other books, the drawings often do not relate to one another either sequentially as compositions or in subject matter. The juxtaposition of various themes—*mahasiddha* and *ragamala* (D10), Hindu and Buddhist divinities (D8, D21), and iconographic figures and narrative themes (D5, D7)—also clearly demonstrate that these books were intended to be a source of visual information for the artist to be drawn upon as and when needed.

Although the drawings were meant primarily for painters, they were very likely used by both sculptors and architects. Often the same person served all three functions as in India and other traditional societies. Certainly, books with architectural drawings (D25) must have been used by both architects and priests whose function was to ensure the safety of the building by performing the required rites. Religious rituals were an essential part of the building process, whether the structure was a house of god or a house of man.

Most figures and compositions are purely linear statements made with either a quill or fine brush and in black or red ink. Black ink was used far more frequently than red. Seldom are the figures shaded to enhance their modeling, which is achieved largely by the articulate definition and flexibility of the line. Although there are many examples of hastily and even carelessly executed sketches, by and large the outlines were firmly drawn, with little or no correction. Because artists did not use any form of pencil or graphite and since these drawings were not meant to be seen as works of art, it was deemed a virtue to be economical. In a very few instances, however, faint traces of alternative lines can be discerned, indicating that some artists did experiment with ideas even while preparing their models. The quality of the drawings differs considerably from book to book. There can be little doubt that the artists responsible for the two earliest books (D1–2) were master draftsmen who drew swiftly with a firm and confident line. If Srimantadeva was himself responsible for the sketches in the book prepared in Lhasa (D9), then he too must be admired for his drawing skill. Neither Indraraja nor Jogideva (D10) were accomplished draftsmen as were other professional artists represented in the collection (D22–24). By and

large, the drawings are competently executed and details of ornamentation, costume, and furnishings are rendered with meticulous care.

Aesthetically, the finest drawings are contained in the earliest book in the collection (D1). Particularly expressive are the faces of the kissing deities, one of whom is modeled with colors, and a figure similar to a *mahasiddha*, whose face has been made especially animated by the articulation of various contours and features. The drawings in this book relate closely to several fifteenth-century paintings in the collection. In fact, the sketches of the kissing divine figures may well have served as models for the heads of Samvara and his spouse in the painting (P13).

Although of about the same period, the *Ramayana* drawings (D2) are executed in an altogether different style. Indeed, these *Ramayana* drawings constitute perhaps the earliest known examples of narrative composition of this kind in Nepal. Moreover, this is one of the few documents in the collection that can be associated with a specific city, Bhaktapur. The drawing style may be unique. Although some contemporary Buddhist *paubhas* contain narrative panels, they are rendered in a different style. Within the general convention, the *Ramayana* compositions are executed with graphic clarity and a pleasing balance between the figures and their surrounding space.

Sixteenth-century sketchbooks are rare. Of the three examples in the collection, two (D5 and D7) are rendered in a vigorous and florid manner that seems to have flourished from about 1550 to 1625, especially for murals and book illustrations. Few *paubhas* in this style are known, and D6 may well be one of the earliest documents of this busy but engaging style. It is not possible to localize the style in any of the three major Nepali cities, although it may have originated in Bhaktapur.[8] The figures in the earlier style of the *Ramayana* sketches (D2) are enclosed by thicker lines. The compositions are made much denser with bold and flamboyant vegetal and ornamental designs, which at times overwhelm the figures. By contrast, in the lively compositions depicting scenes from the life of Krishna (D6), the drawing is restrained and elegant, representing a less exuberant, although more expressive stylistic variation.

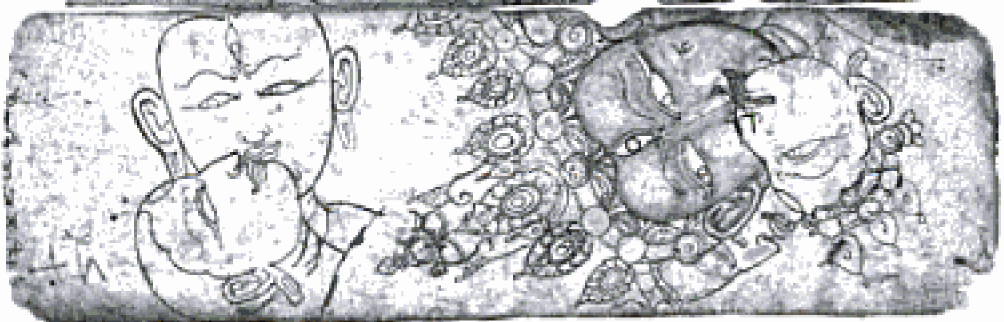
The seventeenth century witnessed the introduction of Rajput and Mughal elements from India and Sino-Tibetan features from Tibet. Neither revolutionized the history of Nepali art. Although the Newari artist synthesized some foreign elements into various local expressions, by and large the paintings of the period rarely reflect the creative impulse. Most model-books and manuals survive from the seventeenth and later centuries. Here again, the sketches of the competent and talented artists (D11, D13–16, D19) are beautifully and carefully drawn, while others are more cursory and perfunctory. Several books of this period are important for the study of Tibetan painting, the most interesting being Srimantadeva's book (D9). Here is exhibited a different style of drawing altogether, and no other document, as far as I am aware, shows the Newari (Tibetan?) artist's skill in capturing so well both the technical virtuosity and spirit of Chinese draftsmanship. The compositions clearly reveal the differences in approach represented by Indo-Nepali and Chinese traditions of pictorial imagery. Generally, however, the Newari artist was not influenced in any fundamental way by the Sino-Tibetan tradition. By the nineteenth century even in their fiercely self-imposed isolation, the artists of the valley were aware of various forms of European art, but neither European painting nor drawing exerted any measurable influence upon the Newari artist.

Notes

1. Quoted in Shah 1961, 1: 145.
2. Pal 1967c.
3. Lowry 1977.
4. Slusser 1982, 1: 363–64.
5. Several *mahasiddhas* are said to have visited Nepal and are associated with particular caves in the valley (see Dowman 1981), but the cult of the *mahasiddhas* has not prevailed.
6. This complete series of *ragamala* pictures is now in the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena (see Pal 1974b).
7. M. W. Evans, *Medieval Drawings* (London and New York: Paul Hamlyn, 1969), p. 14.
8. For a further discussion of this style see Pal 1967d.

Catalogue





D1a





D1b

D1 *Book of Iconographic Drawings*
1400–1450
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 2 5/8 x 8 1/2 in (6.7 x 21.6 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.14

Five of the twelve folios of this incomplete book are devoted to texts on iconometry with precise measurements for Buddhist images. The remaining folios are filled with sketches and studies of various parts of images as well as complete figures, ornaments, and plants. The figures are sketchily rendered, and the artist seems to have been particularly interested in drawing heads and faces. Some faces are modeled with shading and delicate touches of red and blue. In one or two instances, grids are ruled to guide the artist in drawing the figures, most of which are rendered firmly and spontaneously. The artist was not particularly interested in the placement of images on the page; some are drawn upside down and others sideways. Clearly the drawings are by one artist, who may not have executed them all at once. Occasionally, brief statements accompanying the figures provide iconographic instructions; single letters usually signify color notations. The subjects include the Buddha, Chinnamasta, faces of Samvara and Nairatma, mandalas, the twenty-eight *nakshatras*, or stars, and Vajrabhairava.

The style of writing and drawing clearly indicate that the book was made in the first half of the fifteenth century. The male and female faces are closely comparable to those seen in the Avalokitesvara painting (P8), the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11), and the *paubha* of Samvara and Vajravarahi (P13). Indeed, the sketchbook may have belonged to the family of artists responsible for P13. Perhaps the most arresting sketch in the book is a drawing of a bearded face (*b*). The powerfully expressive head is so lifelike that it may represent a portrait. The confident and effortless quality of these drawings indicates that the book must once have belonged to a master artist.



D2a



D2b

D2 Book with Text and Sketches
Bhaktapur; dated 1450–55
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 3/8 x 9 in (8.1 x 22.8 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.1

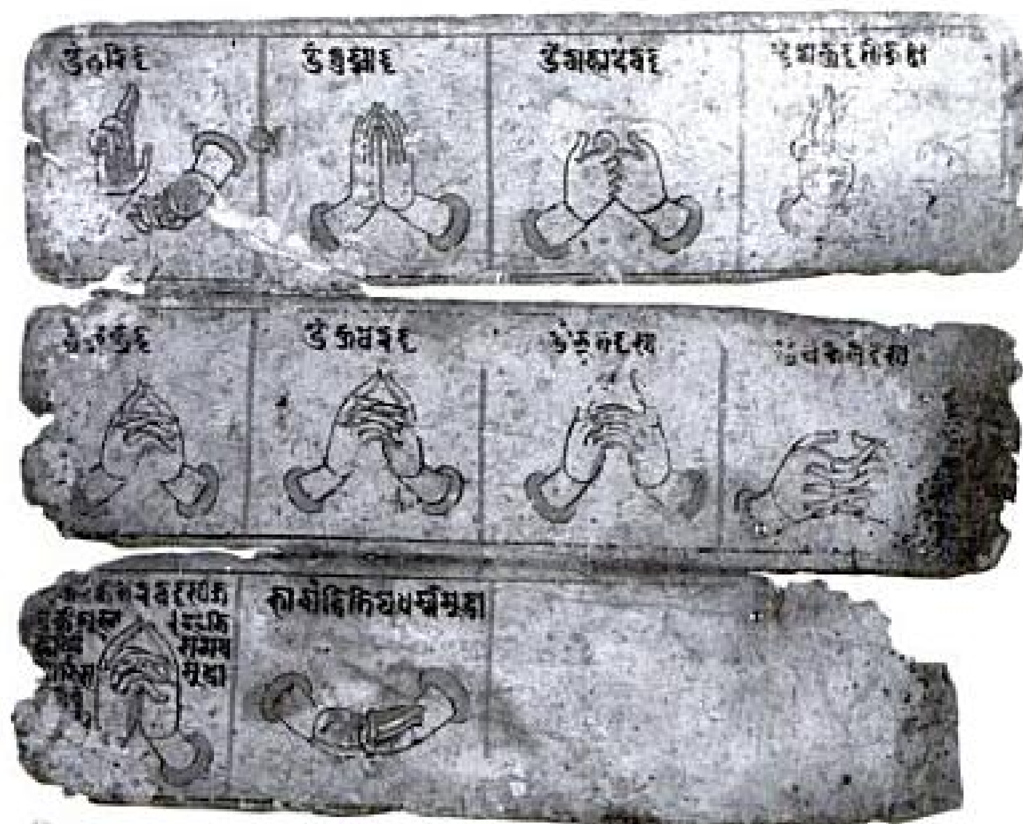
This incomplete book is an important historical document and perhaps the most interesting in the collection. It is a *thyasaphu*, a Newari term for chronicle, and contains information about events surrounding the birth of a son to the reigning monarch Yakshamalla (r. 1428–82). Various dates ranging between August–September 1450 and March–April 1455 are recorded in the text (see Appendix). It appears that the sketches were copied in 1450 on the occasion of the performance of a *Ramayana* dance-drama in honor of the birth of the prince.

The historical events recorded in the chronicle are as follows: A prince, who is not named, was born to Yakshamalla in 1450; two days later, perhaps to celebrate this birth, the king dedicated a Sivalinga; little more than a week later, a dramatic performance of the *Ramayana* was arranged, presumably as part of the birth celebrations.

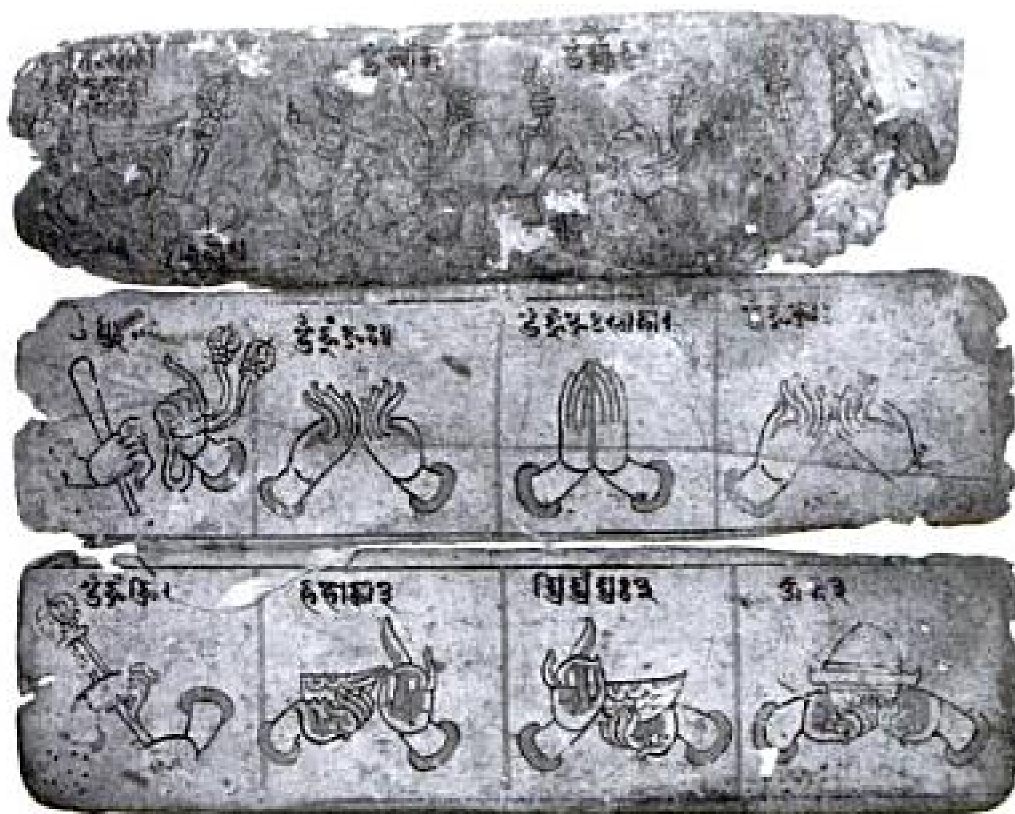
Near the end of 1452 the Tūlāpurushadāna ceremony was held in honor of Prince Rayamalla. During this ceremony, performed by kings in India and Nepal quite regularly, an individual's weight in gold, silver, or some other precious substance is distributed among the brahmins. Prince Rayamalla later succeeded his father, Yakshamalla, and reigned between 1482/87 and 1504. He may have been the prince born in 1450.

The sketches are sandwiched between pages of writing and are rendered in black and red ink. Most drawings made with red ink are much too faded except for four spirited studies of riders and horses (*a*). Although the figures are dressed in the Nepali manner, they wear hats seen more commonly in Tibetan paintings. Perhaps such hats were also worn by Nepali cavalrymen during the fifteenth century. Two horses are winged, indicating that the four might represent celestial personages.

The remaining sketches, all of excellent quality and delicacy, illustrate Vaishnava themes, mostly from the *Ramayana*. In the sections illustrated here (*b*), a monkey, probably Hanuman, is lodged in a tree and watches the two monkey brothers Bali and Sugriva locked in a duel. In the next folio, adjacent to a group of floral studies, Hanuman is again shown in a tree. In the next illustration he appears before the captive Sita in the *asoka* forest in Lanka. In the remaining folio a four-armed Vishnu is destroying two demons, probably Madhu and Kaitabha. Then follows a coronation scene, the central figure is perhaps Rama, hero of the *Ramayana*. The exact identification of the third panel is not clear, but very likely it represents an avatar of Vishnu.



D3a



D3b

D3 *Three Folios from a Book of Iconographic Drawings*
Fifteenth century
Ink and color on paper
Each: 2 1/2 x 8 7/8 in (6.3 x 22.5 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.8

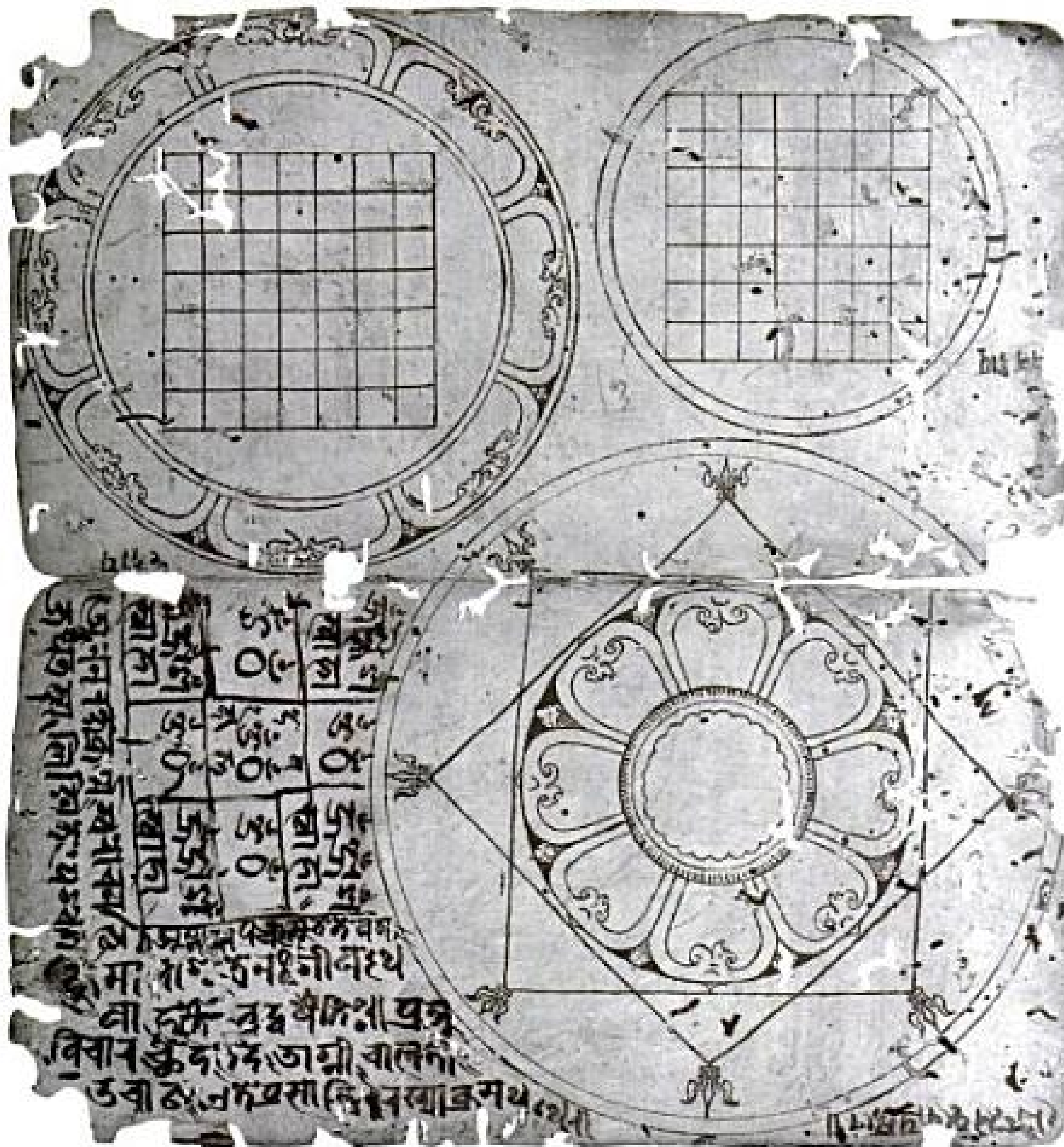
These three folios are from a priest's manual and contain colored sketches of ritualized hand gestures and attributes. The collection also possesses a later, more complete, manuscript of the same type (D26). Most gestures are accompanied by short inscriptions (some consisting of mantras only, others identifying the gods for whom the gestures are to be displayed). For instance, the gods mentioned in the top of one page (*a*) are Hari (a synonym for Vishnu), Brahma, and Sakra (a synonym for Indra). In the middle folio the gestures are intended for Indra, Kubera, Bhuta, and Varuna. The names of the gestures are not given except for the two in the bottom row identified as *samayamudrā* and *bhavyadvitiyadharmamudrā*, both of which are displayed in special tantric rituals.

The hands and fingers (*b*) are outlined in red and black. Where visible, the palms are painted red. The script is known as Bhujimol, and the style of writing is from the fifteenth century.

D4 Book of Rituals and Mandalas
1550–1600
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 4 5/8 x 8 5/8 in (11.3 x 21.9 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.25

The text describes various rituals and gives instructions on the drawing of ritual diagrams, such as mandalas and *yantras*. One chapter ends as follows: *iti devatādidevārchchanāvidhāna samāpta* (here ends the instructions for worshiping various deities). Thus, the book must have been used by a priest as an aide-mémoire.

Apart from two illustrations representing identical images of the god Kumara, rendered in two different styles, all other illustrations are of a wide variety of mandalas, such as those reproduced here, and architectural studies. Also included is a fine drawing of a throne. Two individuals may have been responsible for the drawings since some are markedly much finer than others.



D5 *Book of Iconographic Drawings*
1575–1600
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 1/8 x 8 in (8.0 x 20.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.6

The thirteen surviving folios are devoted entirely to freely drawn images of Buddhist and Hindu deities; composite animals; and Ravana, the villain of the *Ramayana*. Buddhist deities include Bhaishajyaguru, the Buddha, Tara, various forms of Avalokitesvara, and many awesome gods, such as Bhutadamara, Mahakala, Yamantaka. Some folios are badly damaged, but what remains is a rich source for the study of Buddhist iconography. Most figures and designs are drawn boldly in black ink, and some are highlighted with touches of red, yellow, and blue.

The figures appear to be finished sketches rather than preliminary drawings. The florid, ornamental tails of the composite creatures (*a*), swirls of clouds carrying the figure of Ravana (*b*), scaly armor, and other garments are rendered in great detail with consummate skill. Indeed, the flamboyant scrollwork and animated figures make the compositions particularly lively.

Both the drawing style and paleography of the brief inscriptions compare closely with dated documents of the second half of the sixteenth century, such as the 1561 *Temptation of Sakyamuni* in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the 1594 *Hitopadesa* manuscript in the Nepal National Library (Pal 1978, figs. 106, 176).



D5a



D5b

D6 Book of Poems and Sketches
Patan; c. 1600
Ink on paper
Average folio: 4 1/8 x 9 in (11.5 x 22.8 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.20

Altogether this book contains eleven folios of poems and devotional songs composed in Newari and Sanskrit and sketches illustrating the Krishna legends. Most folios are badly worm eaten. The poems and songs appear to have been composed locally and are named after the ragas in which they are to be sung. One eulogistic verse ends with the statement: "during the reign of Sivasimha in the beautiful city of Patan." Elsewhere Sivasimha is referred to as king (Śivasiṁhadevanṛipa). The other name mentioned in the text is Hariharasimha. Sivasimhadeva is very likely Sivasimhamalla of Kathmandu, who annexed the kingdom of Patan in 1597 and ruled over it until his death in 1619 (Slusser 1982, 1: 62). Hariharasimha was one of Sivasimha's sons who governed Patan. Thus, a circa 1600 date for this book is consistent with the historical information provided by the text and the style of writing and drawing.

The sketches, spread over eight panels on the reverse, illustrate the life of Krishna from his birth until the coronation of Ugrasena at Mathura as narrated in book ten of the *Bhagavatapurana*. The illustrations were swiftly executed by a talented artist who was very sure of his draftsmanship. Figures and objects are drawn in outline, and the faces are left blank. Nevertheless, the sketches are extremely lively and, within the limitations of the continuous narration, are organized with dramatic effect. Very likely such sketches were models for narrative paintings on cloth (see P34).

In the first panel illustrated is depicted the exchange of babies in Kamsa's prison at Mathura; the cowherder Vasudeva crossing the river Yamuna to hide the baby Krishna in Brindavan. In the next panel Kamsa takes hold of the substituted female infant from Devaki and smashes her against a rock. The girl, an incarnation of the Great Goddess, appears in the skies to predict Kamsa's death. The entire lower section illustrates the story of Putana, an ogress who was sent by Kamsa to Brindavan to suckle the infant Krishna. Krishna, however, recognized her and destroyed Patana by tearing off her breasts.





D7a



D7b

D7 *Book of Iconographic Drawings*
Bhaktapur (?); c. 1600
Ink on paper
Average folio: 3 x 7 3/8 in (7.6 x 18.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.10

This folding manuscript contains twenty-one folios. Some pages contain Newari text, some are blank, and others are illustrated with iconographic drawings of Hindu subjects. Apparently the artist had found an unfinished manuscript and used the blank pages for his sketches, which are not related to the text. The drawing is rendered in a very distinctive style that appears to have flourished from the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century. It may have been characteristic of a family of artists, perhaps located in Bhaktapur. Most figures were rapidly drawn, and the line is charged with a nervous energy that makes the compositions particularly animated. Color keys on some figures indicate that the drawings were meant to be painted.

Apart from images of various Hindu deities, which display unusual iconographic variations (*a*), there are many other interesting and seldom seen subjects that make this an important document for Nepali art. The folios illustrated here provide some idea of the thematic richness of the book. The militant, multiarmed composite creature on the top folio (*b*) may represent Siva's Sarabha manifestation; the other composition shows Narasimha, an avatar of Vishnu, tearing apart the demon king Hiranyakasipu. On the left of the next folio are Vishnu (identified as Purushottama on the label) and Lakshmi riding Garuda. The rest of the folio is occupied by a skillful composite of two horses that appear as four against a background filled with lively scrolls. Such compositions were popular with Mughal artists in India. In the third folio a dragon is placed below the inscription, and to the right the gods Siva and Indra confront one another. The artist has demonstrated his ability to draw composite images by combining in one animal the heads of the bull and elephant.

D8a



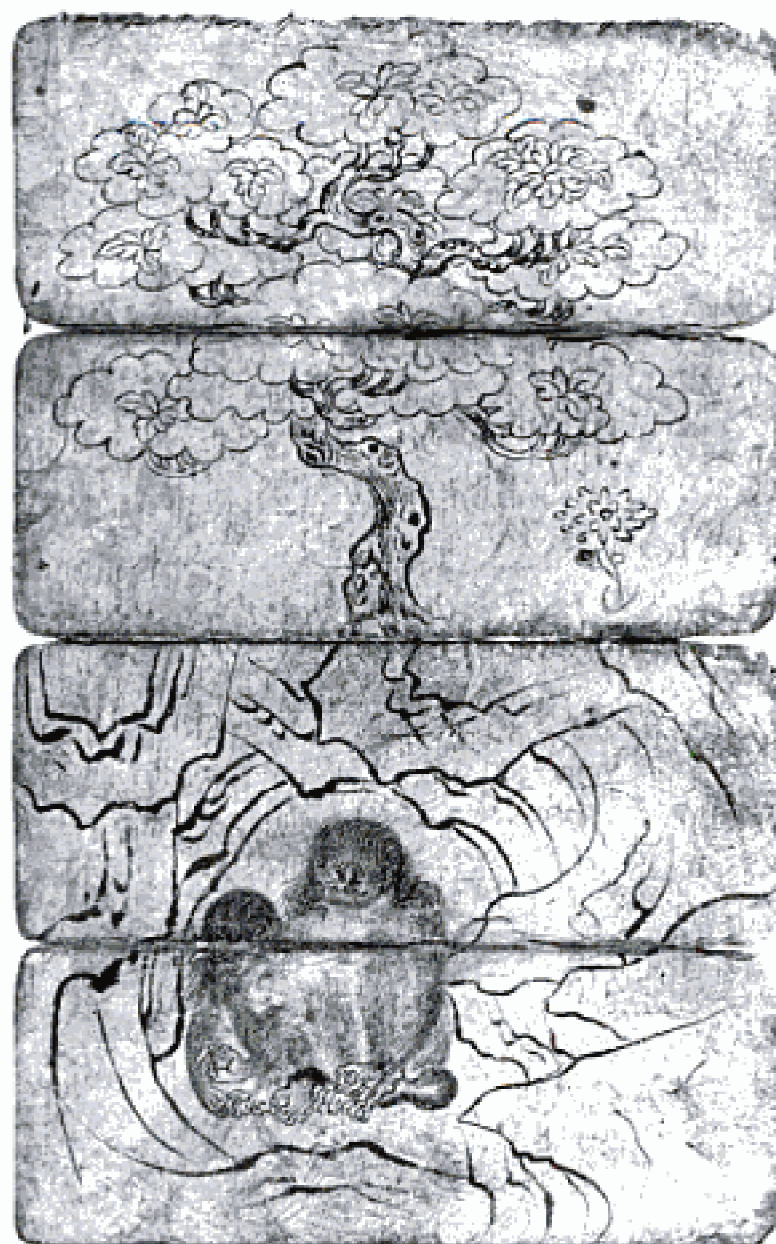
D8b



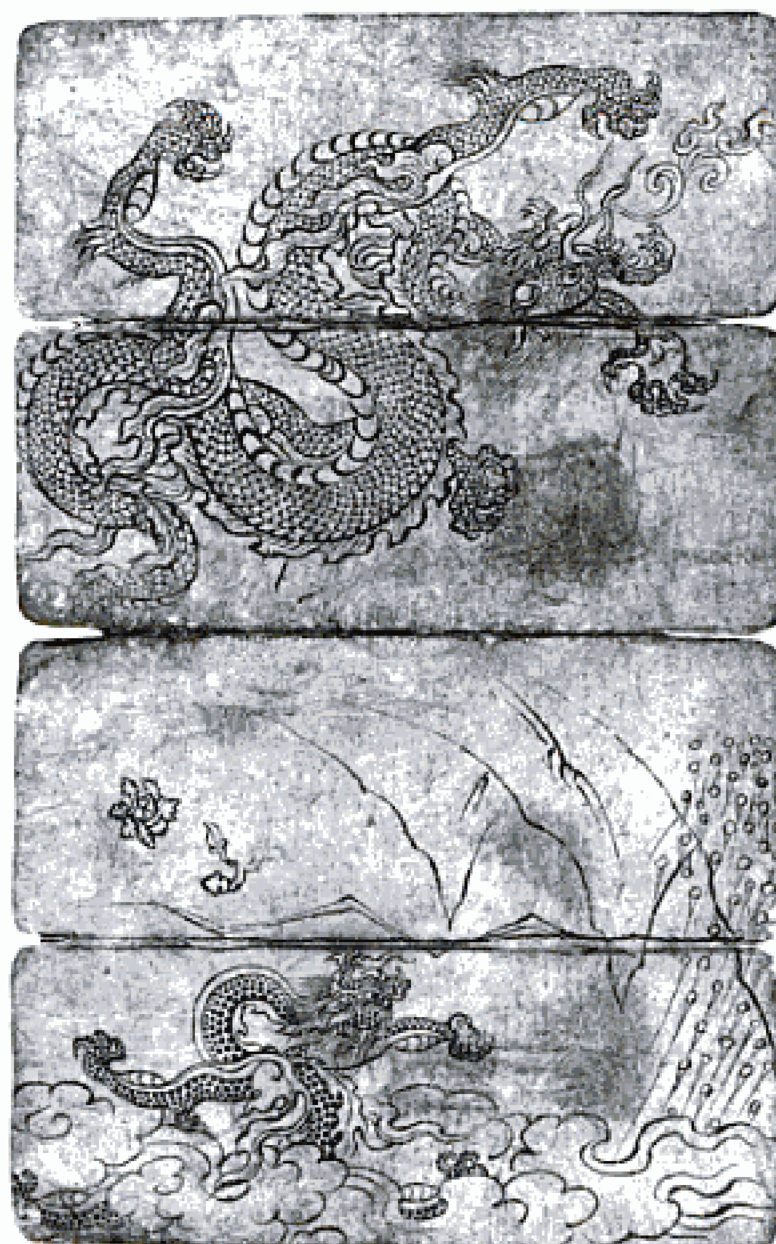
D8 Book of Iconographic Drawings
C. 1600
Ink on paper
Average folio: 2 3/4 x 6 1/8 in (7.0 x 15.5 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.1

The book is devoted primarily to drawings of Hindu and Buddhist deities and contains a few pages of text. Also included are three pages of an incomplete Newari text on rituals and a complete eulogy of the Buddhist goddess Ekajati. The style of writing and drawing is very similar to manuscripts dated toward the end of the sixteenth century. Generally, the quality of the drawings is quite fine.

The book is copiously illustrated with images of both Hindu and Buddhist deities, the latter predominating. This manual is important for the study of iconography because all the deities are identified by inscription. The two dancing figures on the folio illustrated here (*b*) are identified as Manavinayaka and Khantakala. Manavinayaka, a synonym of Ganesa, is an important form of the god in the valley. Khantakala is obviously the Newari term for Ghantakarna, a manifestation of Karttikeya, who is especially popular with the Newars. (For the cults of Manavinayaka and Ghantakarna see Slusser 1982.)



D9a



D9b

D9 Book of Buddhist Litanies and Images
Srimantadeva (?) (Newari, active c. 1650)
Tibet, Lhasa; dated 1652/53
Ink on paper
Each folio: 3 1/4 x 7 3/4 in (8.0 x 19.7 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund; M.81.56
Literature: Pal 1983, p. 61, fig. 1; Pal 1984, fig. 3.

In many ways this is one of the most fascinating documents for the study of both Nepali and Tibetan art history. The colophon states that the manuscript was prepared in Lhasa by the *vajracharya* Srimantadeva in the month of Pausha in the Newari year 773, corresponding to 1652/53 (see Appendix). The first two folios are missing; the book may have begun with a eulogy composed by Srimantadeva himself. Included are two dharanis, not composed by Srimantadeva, devoted to the goddesses Pancharaksha and Vasudhara, while another dharani, known as *āryatadāraṇī*, and a eulogy to the goddess Sarada appear to have been added subsequently by two different hands.

The drawings include illustrations of ascetics and animals in landscape settings, Tibetan-style regents of the directions, an angry form of Vajrapani, and eight deities identified by tiny Tibetan inscriptions; designs of furnishings used in Tibetan paintings; and drawings of clouds and dragons. Indeed, all the figures and scenes illustrated are derived from the repertoire of a Tibetan artist and are seldom encountered in Nepali paintings. It is not certain, however, whether the drawings were made by Srimantadeva himself or by a Tibetan artist. What is clear is that the sketches are prepared to serve as models for Tibetan-style *thankas* painted in Nepal, possibly for visiting Tibetan patrons.

Whoever was responsible for the drawings was certainly an accomplished draftsman. In one folio (*a*), a charming simian couple, their furry bodies realistically drawn, are seated in a deftly sketched cave below a tree. In another drawing (*b*), a cloudburst with a dragon is depicted in the sky, while below, the same dragon is shown descending to earth. How distinctly Sino-Tibetan these drawings are becomes clear by comparing the manner in which the rain is rendered here and in the near-contemporary *ragamala* drawings (D10). Indeed, this kind of lively, naturalistic landscape is generally unknown in Nepali paintings but was much admired in Tibet. It is commonly believed by modern scholars that this landscape style, derived ultimately from the Chinese tradition, developed in central Tibet in the eighteenth century. This dated book, however, conclusively proves that the style had become formulated by the mid-seventeenth century.



D10a



D10b



D10c

D10 Book of Drawings
Indraraja and Jogideva (Newari, active 1675)
Kathmandu (?); dated 1674
Ink on paper
Average folio: 3 1/4 x 6 3/4 in (8.3 x 17.2 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.5

Although incomplete and partially damaged, this is an important sketchbook because of its subject matter and the fact that it is dated. The colophon, written twice, states that the book was prepared by Indraraja and Jogideva in the year 794 of the Newari era, a month after Pratapamalla's death (see Appendix). Thus, the drawings were made in Kathmandu, Pratapamalla's kingdom, in the year 1674. Both Indraraja and Jogideva are described as *chaitrakara* (variant spelling for "painter").

The drawings include representations of ragas, *raginis*, and *mahasiddhas*. Originally, the book must have contained sketches of all eighty-four *mahasiddhas*, of which fifty-three have survived. Generally, the *mahasiddhas* (see S46) were not very popular in Nepal, and these drawings form the largest surviving group.

The *mahasiddhas* illustrated here (*a*) are Sarahapa, who holds an arrow, while his partner offers him a cup of wine; Savaripa, who holds a bow and arrow and watches his *yogini* shoot an arrow; Vilasavajrapa and his partner, who each hold a skull-cup; and Darikapa, who is shown in dalliance with his *yogini*. Indeed each *mahasiddha* has his *yogini* with him. The iconography and figural forms of the *mahasiddhas* are distinctive and not generally encountered either in Nepali or Tibetan paintings. The ragas illustrated here (*b*) are Sarangi, Ramakari, Mallara, and Jati. In the Sarangi raga a female and an ascetic are playing the vina, a stringed instrument. In the Ramakari raga a man falls at the feet of his beloved. The Mallara raga is represented as an ascetic walking in the rain, while the Jati raga is portrayed as a female playing with a parrot. Incidentally, all modes are characterized as raga irrespective of their gender.

The princely figure sketched below one of the colophons (*c*) very likely represents King Pratapamalla. Although several portraits of the monarch are known, in no two examples are the facial features identical. This drawing resembles to some degree an identified portrait of the king (Slusser 1982, 2: pl. 67). In contrast to most other portraits, the monarch is presented more informally in this sketch. Pratapamalla regarded himself as a great poet and must have been an eccentric. Here he is portrayed as a rakish figure with wine cup in one hand and flower bud in the other. He is dressed in Nepali attire with a sleeveless jacket and hat rather than a turban. Underneath the skirtlike dress is sketched the profile of a face, which may mark the starting point of the artist's first attempt. For some reason, he changed his mind and turned the picture around but did not obliterate the tentatively drawn profile.

D11 Book of Buddhist Iconographic Drawings
Seventeenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 3 1/2 x 14 in (8.9 x 35.6 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles;
M.82.169.7.1–23



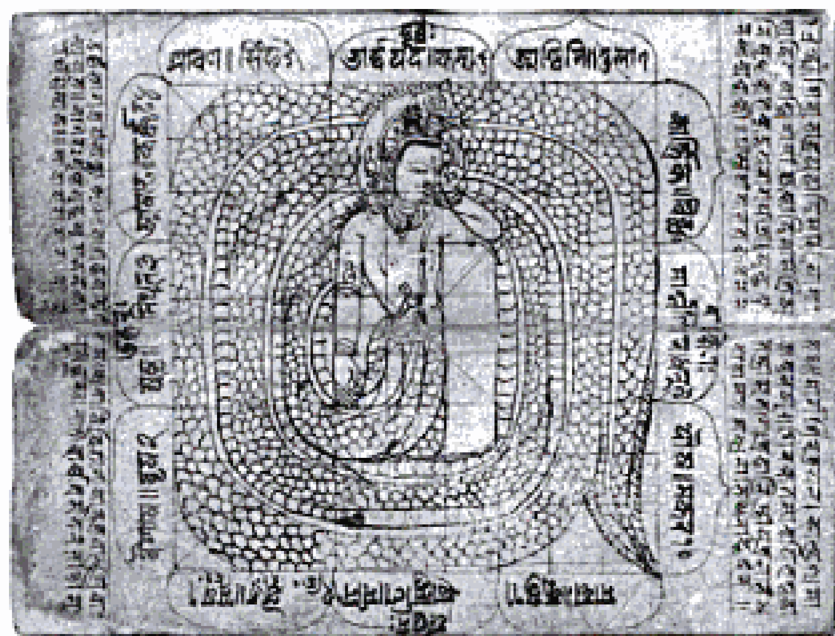
Some of the twenty-three pages of this incomplete manuscript, without title or colophon, have text. Mantras and *stotras* (eulogies) of various Buddhist deities are written in Sanskrit. The eulogies—associated with ragas—are meant to be sung. The remaining folios are illustrated with divine figures, mostly male, usually five to a page, but in some instances two only. The images may either represent different deities or simply a divine model demonstrating various postures and gestures. The latter seems more probable since all the figures are identical except for their postures and gestures. With one or two exceptions, each figure holds the bell and thunderbolt, the most frequently used implements in Buddhist ritual. The only other attribute represented is the sword, which replaces the thunderbolt.

The figures are firmly and confidently drawn without any correction, and the wide variety of stances and hand gestures makes them a lively group. Although ritualized, these postures and gestures are clearly borrowed from the dancer's repertoire. Some of these variations are also rendered in paintings.



D12 Folios from a Book of Iconographic Drawings
Seventeenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 4 1/4 x 11 in (10.8 x 27.9 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.22

The seven folios of this book contain five drawings and some text. Of fine quality, the drawings are predominantly Tibetan in style and bear comparison with the more elaborate sketchbook of Srimantadeva (D9). One drawing depicts a spirited horse carrying three flaming jewels. The other four drawings represent Dhritarashtra, Vaisravana, Virudhaka, and Virupaksha, the four regents of the universe. The regents are depicted in pairs across two folios. With the exception of Dhritarashtra, who has a benign countenance, the others are portrayed as menacing figures. All four are dressed in the attire of Mongolian warriors, which was commonly worn in Tibet. Their faces are expressive, and details of clothing and ornamentation have been finely rendered. The two regents illustrated here are Vaisravana carrying the banner and mongoose and Virupaksha holding the snake and stupa or chaitya. The mongoose is depicted as a spirited animal vomiting gems, which are collecting on the rocky platform below.



D13 Book of Tantric Rituals and Astrology
Seventeenth century
Ink and color on paper with leather binding
2 1/2 x 6 1/2 in (6.4 x 16.5 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.19

The book consists primarily of text written in a beautiful Newari script. Altogether there are forty-two folios, some illustrated with exquisitely rendered diagrams; the book does not contain a colophon. Much of the text concerns Bhairava and the Great Goddess. The diagrams, generally identified as *yantras* and *chakras*, were used in religious rituals or served astrological functions. For instance, the diagram illustrated here depicts a beautifully executed *naga* surrounded by twelve lotus petals, each containing the name of a month and sign of the zodiac. The form of the *naga* is skillfully and imaginatively contained within the square, the intersecting diagonals of which meet at the navel of the figure. Stretched along his side, his right hand displays the teaching gesture, while his left hand is raised to his face, a gesture also used by the Tibetan saint Milarepa (P22). Other diagrams, as finely drawn as the one illustrated here, represent the *sriyantra*—the well-known symbol of the Great Goddess—the lotus *chakra*, and the tortoise *chakra*.



D14 The Goddess Indrani
Seventeenth century
Ink and color on paper; 9 x 8 in (22.8 x 20.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.11

One of the Mother Goddesses, Indrani is seated in the yogic posture across a skull-cup. She is appropriately crowned and bejeweled and has a prominent third eye on her forehead. In her principal hands she holds the trident and skull-cup. The upper right hand holds the noose, and the corresponding left hand holds the thunderbolt, her distinctive attribute. She is the energy (sakti) of the god Indra, hence, she is called Indrani and is given the thunderbolt, Indra's weapon. The outline is black, but all ornaments, crown, and flames in the halo are painted red.



D15 The God Bhairava
Seventeenth century
Ink and color on paper; 9 1/4 x 8 1/8 in
(23.5 x 20.6 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.2

This drawing may have served as a preliminary sketch rendered by a senior artist for a painting to be completed by an assistant. It may also have served as an artist's model. Not only are the principal colors identified by initial letters, but various attributes are also identified by inscription as is the deity himself. For instance, the letter written on Bhairava's right thigh is *ni* to mean *nila* (blue); the letter on the body of the outstretched male below the god's feet is *pi* to represent *pita* (yellow).

Bhairava stands in a militant posture with his flying red and orange hair adorned with crescents and a skull. A tiger skin is his garment, and a snake forms one of his garlands. Two of his hands stretch out an elephant skin behind him, and two more hold the skull-cup and chopper against his chest. The other hands display (clockwise from upper left) the mace, cot's leg, gesture of admonition, flower, bow, shield, noose, elephant goad, sword, arrows, wheel, flag, kettledrum, double-thunderbolt, and trident.

D16 *Folio from an Iconographic Sketchbook* Color plate, p. 54

D16 Folio from an Iconographic Sketchbook
Seventeenth century
Ink and color on paper; 9 1/4 x 8 1/2 in
(23.5 x 20.6 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.9

Reverse



On one side of this stray folio from an iconographic sketchbook is the cosmic form of the goddess Kali; on the reverse is the outline of a horse with various comments and notations written in Newari across and around the animal. Very likely this folio and D14 belonged to the same sketchbook as is indicated by their similar size and style.

The goddess is seated on her haunches on the outstretched form of her consort Bhairava, an angry emanation of Siva. The base along the bottom is adorned with two rows of summarily rendered skulls. Garlands of skulls, severed heads, and snakes serve as ornaments for Kali and her prostrate spouse. The twenty-four hands of the goddess hold various weapons and symbols, the most unusual of which is the skeleton held by her principal hand against her breasts. The exact identification of the goddess is difficult to determine, but that she is a form of Kali is evident from the iconography and faintly legible inscription to the right of her head.

D17 *A Priest's Manual with Mandalas*



D17 *A Priest's Manual with Mandalas*
Seventeenth century
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 7/8 x 9 in (9.8 x 22.8 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.21

A considerable portion of the eleven folios is devoted to mantras and prayers addressed to various Hindu deities including the eight celestial guardians. There are also two invocations to *Samaveda* and *Atharvaveda*, two religious texts of the Vedic Aryans. The work of two different scribes is discernible.

The illustrations consist of three fully colored mandalas painted as double-page compositions. The mandalas are identified in very tiny letters as Yakādaśayāmaṇḍala, Māghayā, and Anantayā. The first expression is Newari for *ekādaśī*, which means the eleventh day of each fortnight in the lunar calendar. Māghayā refers to the month of Magha (January–February), and Anantayā refers to Anantavrata, a popular Vaishnava rite in Nepal. Thus, these mandalas were obviously meant to be used in specific religious rites during which a priest probably drew them on the ground with powdered colors.

Illustrated here is the Ekādasi mandala, the basic form and coloring of which are similar to the Anantavrata mandala. The eight auspicious symbols along the outermost square are common to all three mandalas. The four emblems (conch, trident, peacock feathers, and sword) at the four corners of the innermost square and four figures—three animal (the lion and bull can only be identified) and one human—in the four gateways of the Ekādasi mandala are omitted from the Anantavrata mandala. Indeed, the animals and their emblems probably indicate that the Ekādasi mandala may have been used by Saivas or Saktas. Likewise, the four emblems are also included in the Māghayā mandala, although the basic design consists of a circle within two intersecting squares. Possibly this is a *yantra* associated with the Great Goddess.



D18 *Manual for Ritual Dances*
Seventeenth–eighteenth century
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 x 11 11/16 in (7.6 x 29.9 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.18

In this manual are 144 illustrations on eighteen loose folios. Such books are known in Nepal as *carya* dance manuals and were prepared by the *vajracharyas* as instruction books for ritual dances. Each panel contains inscriptions with three separate types of information. Names of various dance positions are written at the top of the figures. For instance, the postures of the eight figures in the two upper pages of the three folios illustrated here are identified as *lalitasana*. In some instances, the direction in which the positions should be employed is also given. For example, the four figures on the second page are identified as Nairiritya, Varuna, Vayu, and Kubera, which are names of directions as well as their presiding deities. Gestures are also identified in some instances. The purpose for which the posture is to be used or the result expected by the performance of the dance is written around the legs of the figures. Below the figures are the appropriate mantras.

Except for the garments, which are painted red, all the figures are rendered in black. The person responsible for the drawings was not a great draftsman. Indeed, so perfunctory are the sketches that one can hardly recognize the various gestures made by the awkward and childishly drawn hands. Similar, naïve sketches may also be seen in a slightly earlier Bengali manuscript, which may have been rendered in Mithila or Bengal in India (P. Pal, "Evidences of Buddhist Painting in East India in the Fifteenth Century," *Journal of the Asiatic Society* 8, no. 4 [1966]: 267–70, pl. I).



D19a



D19b

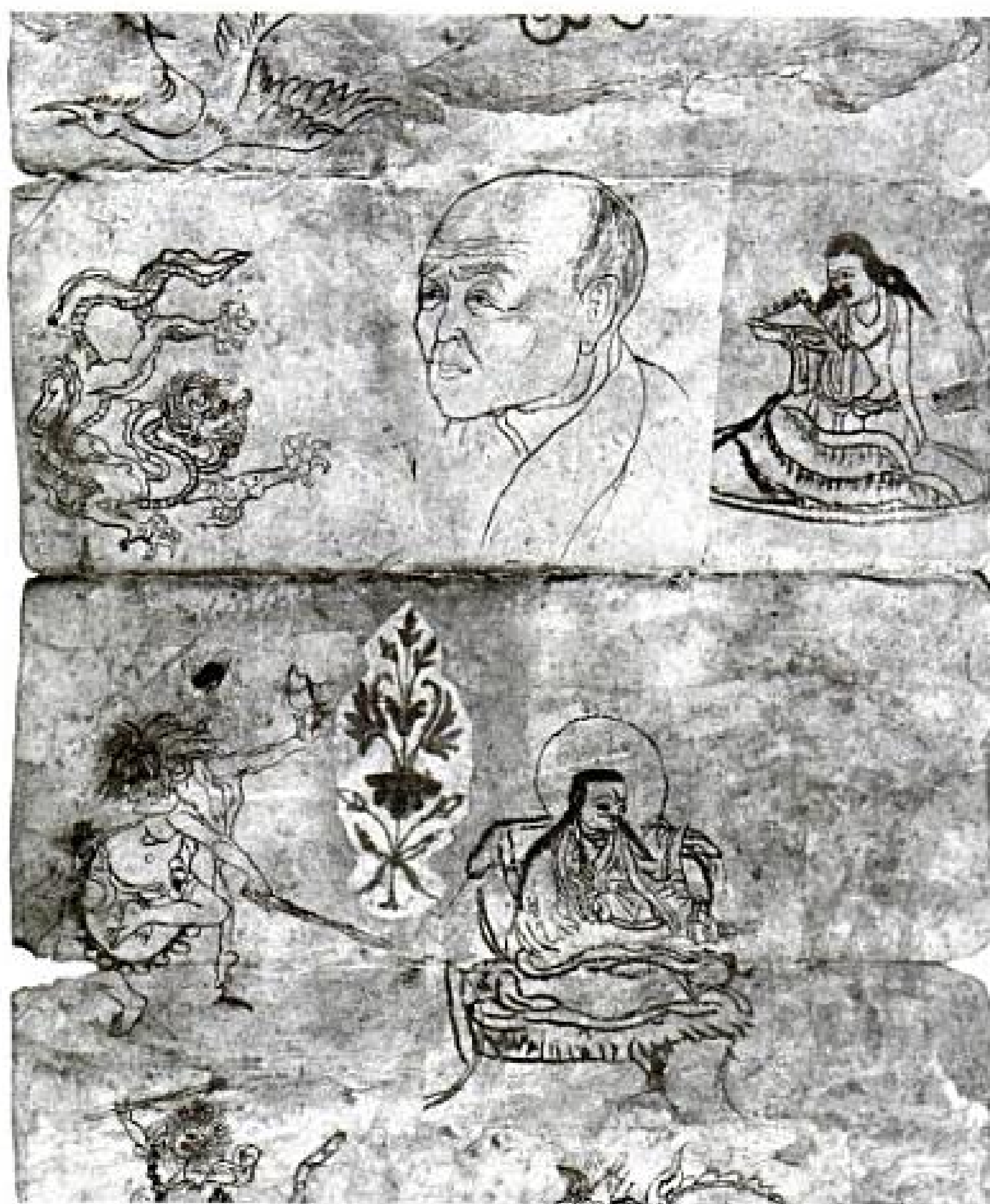
D19 Book of Buddhist Iconographic Drawings
Eighteenth century
Ink and color on paper and wood
Each folio: 3 1/2 x 8 in (8.9 x 20.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.5

The book consists of fifty-four folios and one wood cover. Except for two damaged folios, it is in fairly good condition. The Newari text is minimal and consists of a few lines and a brief list of the drawings in the book. Most of the book comprises ink drawings of a wide variety of Buddhist subjects. These include illustrations of many gods and goddesses; elevations of stupas; examples of the stylized Lantsa script used frequently in Tibetan paintings; and sketches of pedestals, scrollwork, and designs of thrones and shrines. Deities are sometimes identified in the labels written in Newari. One drawing has been crudely filled in with color. At least two different artists may have been responsible for the drawings.

Most images are easily identifiable and represent deities commonly worshiped by Buddhists in Nepal. Two rather unusual compositions are illustrated here.

In one (*a*), a group of Newars is shown worshiping before a shrine with a curious image. Set in the center of the conventional Nepali shrine is a divine head formed with various symbols. The mouth is a book, the nose is a flaming sword, the face is outlined with floral stalks, and the forehead is formed with three crowns. Solar and lunar symbols decorate the head and represent the ears. Two additional eyes are placed outside the columns of the shrine, and the head is supported by the central stem of a lotus. Flowers of the two side stems of the lotus support a bowl of jewels on one side and a skull-cup on the other. This composite image obviously symbolizes a deity, and the most likely candidate is Manjusri because of the sword and book. The shrine is reminiscent of a type of painting common in Tibet in which deities are similarly suggested by their emblems and attributes (Pal 1969, pp. 82–83).

The second composition (*b*) is the most elaborate in the book. Spread over six consecutive pages, it depicts a cosmic deity with several legs and heads and one thousand arms. He is flanked by two wide borders of beautifully rendered sinuous plants beyond which is a dancing Ganesa on the right and a dancing Bhairava on the left. That the central figure is Buddhist is indicated by the presence of the Buddha head at the summit of the pyramidal arrangement of fourteen heads. He can further be identified as Manjusri by the sword and book held in his two principal hands. Manjusri and Siva were closely identified, and, hence in this cosmic image, the Buddhist deity is depicted with various Saiva attributes (see also S50).



D20a



D20b

D20 Book of Iconographic Drawings
Tibet (?); eighteenth century
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 1/4 x 8 in (8.1 x 20.2 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.15

Of the twenty-two folios in this book, only two pages contain Newari text. The drawings and sketches are of a wide variety of subjects. Most figures and motifs belong to the Tibetan rather than Nepali tradition. Executed on very thin paper, the drawings were pasted into a book of thicker yellow paper. Thus, it is possible that the artist made the sketches in Tibet and upon returning to Nepal gave them greater permanence by affixing them into a book. Some illustrations are drawn in black and others in red; only a few are colored. Most are of fine quality and appear to have been made spontaneously.

In addition to gods and goddesses, dancing *dakinis* (a class of Buddhist demigoddesses), and dragons, the book includes striking representations of animals and Tibetan monks. The large head sketched on one of the folios (*a*) is a particularly realistic study and appears to have been drawn from life.

D21 *Book of Eulogies and Iconographic Drawings*



D21 Book of Eulogies and Iconographic Drawings
Eighteenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 3 3/4 x 8 1/4 in (9.5 x 21.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.6

In this folding book of thirty-three folios, the text is written on one side and the sketches are drawn on the other. The text appears to have been written by various scribes and is of good to indifferent quality. The Sanskrit and Newari text consists of eulogies dedicated to Buddhist deities. Several eulogize Vajrayogini, who is an especially popular goddess among Newari Buddhists. The appropriate raga (mode) and *tala* (beat) to be observed during the singing of each eulogy precedes the text.

The sketches on the reverse begin with the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism and floral patterns usually found in paintings. These are followed by freely drawn sketches of various gods and goddesses, most of whom are Hindu. They include Ganesa, ten avatars of Vishnu, Seven Mother Goddesses, Bhairava, Hanuman, Krishna with milkmaids (see illustration), and Hanubhairava. The three Buddhist deities included are Mahakala, Manjusri, and Vasudhara.

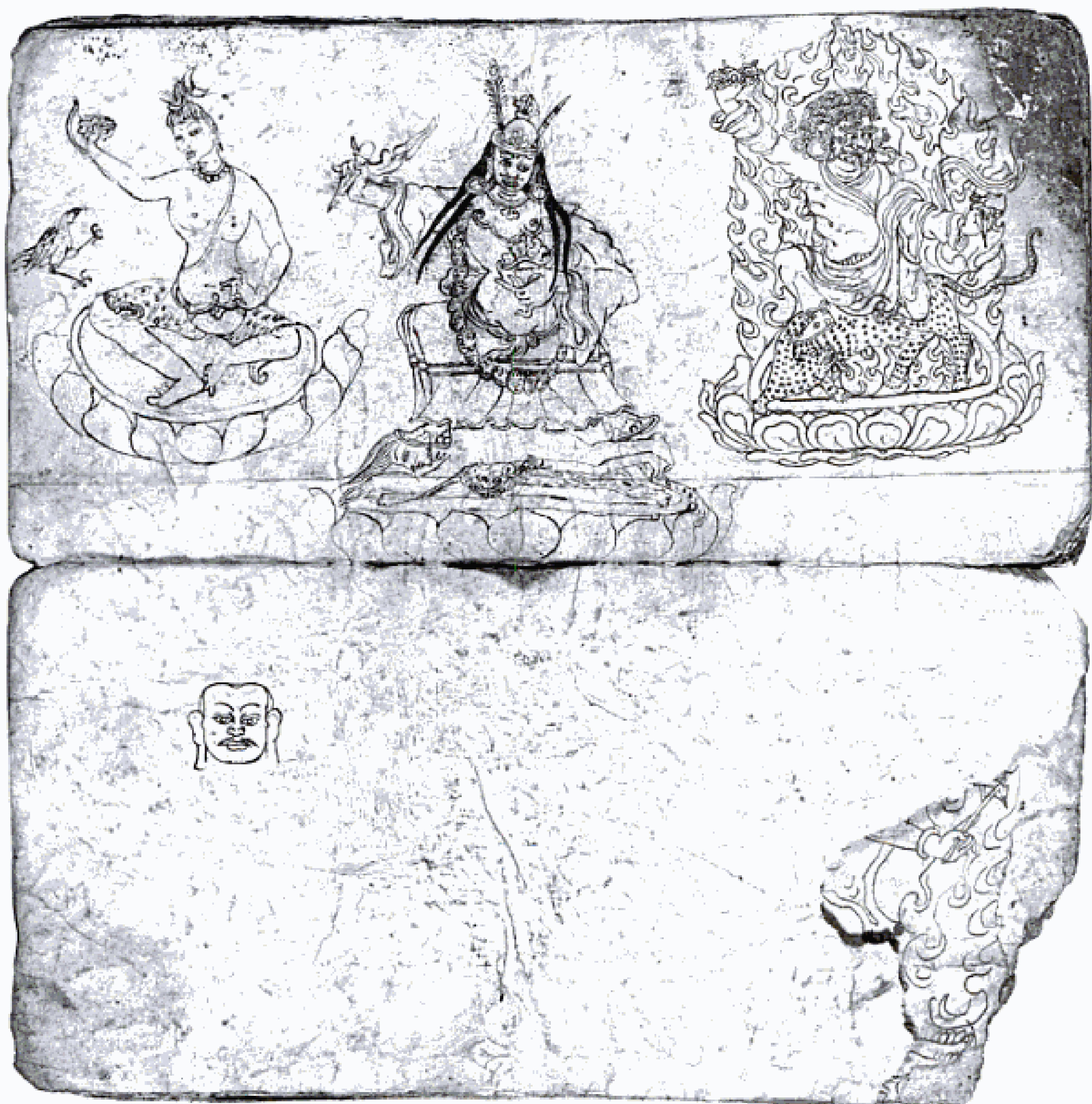
D22 Book of Iconographic Drawings
Eighteenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 7 1/2 x 15 1/4 in (19.1 x 38.8 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.10

D22a



The fifteen folios of this book are copiously illustrated on both sides. The folio size is considerably larger than the average Nepali folding book. Most figures represent Buddhist gods and goddesses commonly worshiped in Tibet; symbols and architectural designs are also illustrated. In addition, the book contains various representations of *mahasiddhas*, demonic figures, and regents of the directions (*a*), who are generally depicted only in Tibetan paintings. Thus, there seems little doubt that, like several other books in the collection, this was the property of a family of artists who produced artwork for Tibetan patrons. The artist drew his figures with a firm hand and was careful with details, note especially the illustrations of the four divine regents. Some other sketches are drawn more freely. Especially interesting is the figure on the center of this folio. Both his costume and hat are typically Tibetan as is the *phurbu* (magic dagger) he is brandishing with his right hand.

D22b





D23 Book of Buddhist Images
C. 1800
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 4 1/4 x 7 in (10.8 x 17.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Johnson; M.75.137

The fifteen folios of this incomplete sketchbook contain images of various Buddhist divinities. Unlike other iconographic books, most representations are fully colored. Neither the drawing nor the coloring, however, is very accomplished. Most representations are spread over two pages, and some deities are identified by brief labels. A few folios are badly charred, indicating that the book may have been rescued from a fire. The style of representation strongly reflects eighteenth-century Tibetan mannerisms as is evident from the illustrations depicting Sarasvati, goddess of wisdom. Other deities represented include Kubera (called Duojarāja), Tara, and several forms of Mahakala.

D24 *Book of Iconographic Drawings*

D24 Book of Iconographic Drawings
C. 1800
Ink with traces of color on paper
Average folio: 3 x 7 3/8 in (7.6 x 18.7 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.13

Only five folios remain of what must once have been a richly adorned book of iconographic drawings. The drawings represent Hindu and Buddhist gods and goddesses, a few of whom are identified by inscription. Some images are surrounded by aureoles decorated with floral designs seen commonly in Nepali and Tibetan bronzes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The drawings are all rendered in ink, and a few images display touches of red.

One side (*a*) includes representations of Vishnu, Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Lokesvara, Manjusri, Manavinayaka, Krishna holding a flute, Mahakala, and Chamunda, who is worshiped in Nepal as Dakshinakali. Vishnu's image at the left of the uppermost folio is interesting as it is placed in a landscape of briefly rendered hills and stylized trees with various animals facing the god. This may be a representation of the hill of Changu Narayan, which was once forested and which remains the most important shrine of the deity in Nepal.

The other side (*b*) includes illustrations of Kumara, Bhagavati (Mahishasuramardini), Mahadeva, the Buddha, Vyaghrini, Simhini, two forms of Manjusri and miscellaneous drawings of the auspicious waterpot, banner, heads, flowers, and elephant trunk.

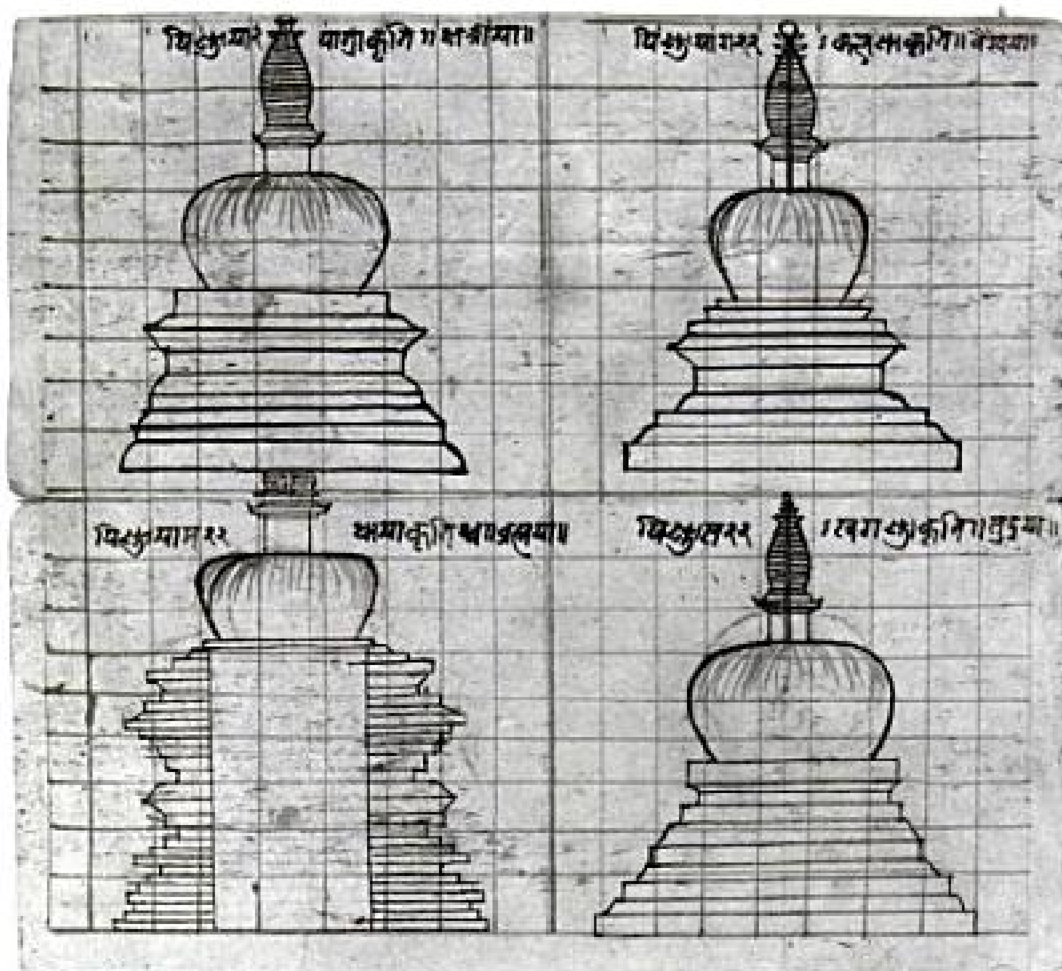


D24a

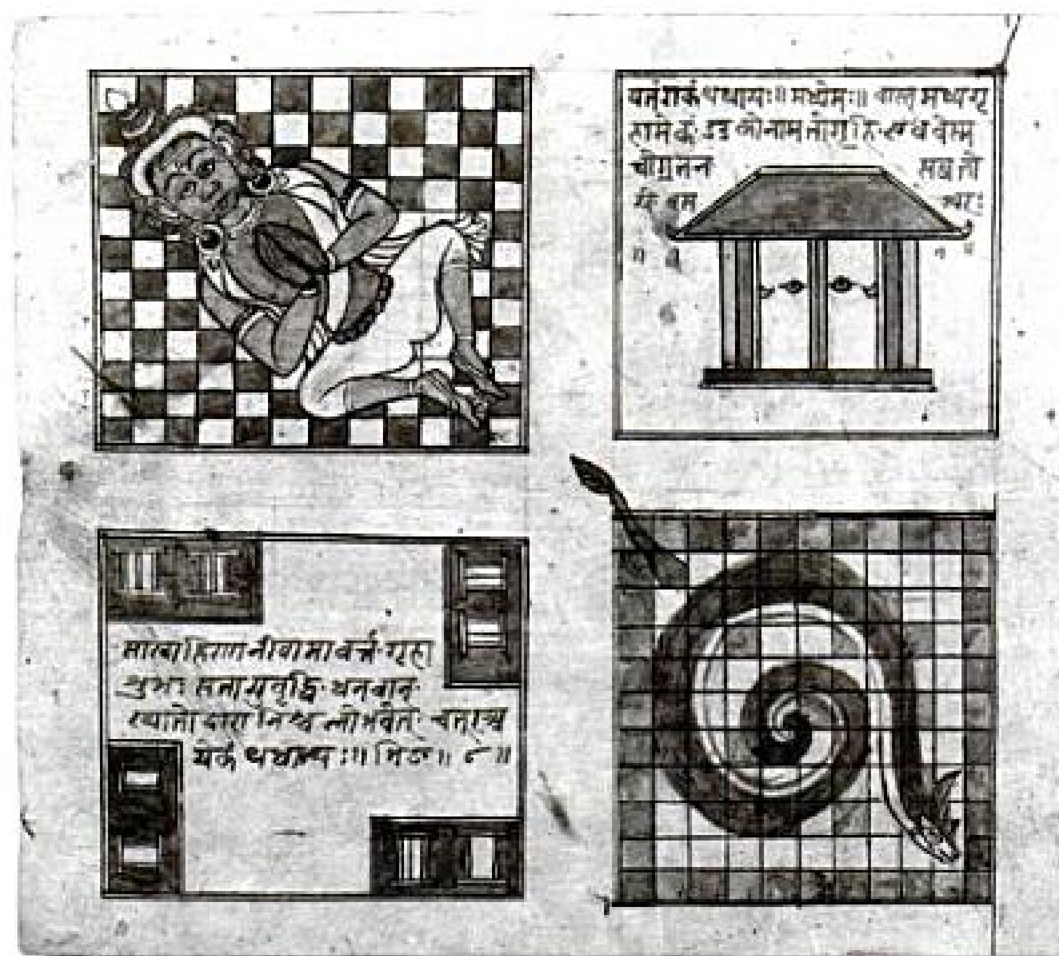


D24b

D25 *Book of Drawings*
Dated 1892
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 4 x 8 7/8 in (10.1 x 22.5 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.12



D25a



D25b

Not only is this book dated, but it is a fascinating art-historical document as it contains a wide variety of sketches not generally encountered in such books. In addition to a few images and hand gestures, the book is copiously illustrated with various kinds of diagrams and charts; designs for chaityas and shrines; architectural sections and ground plans for buildings; and illustrations of *yantras* and mandalas. Some drawings are accompanied by notes written in Newari. Also included are Newari passages that appear to be mantras for rituals associated with building ceremonies.

Two of the folios illustrated here contain four sketches of chaityas identified by their dome shape. In the first folio (*a*, top left), the dome is shaped like a pot, relating to the *kshatriya* caste; the second dome is shaped like a waterpot and is suitable for the brahmin caste; the third is shaped like a pile of grain and is appropriate for the *vaisya* caste; while the fourth is shaped like a bird's egg and represents the *sudra* caste. Although the chaitya is a Buddhist symbol, the four types are associated with the four Hindu castes.

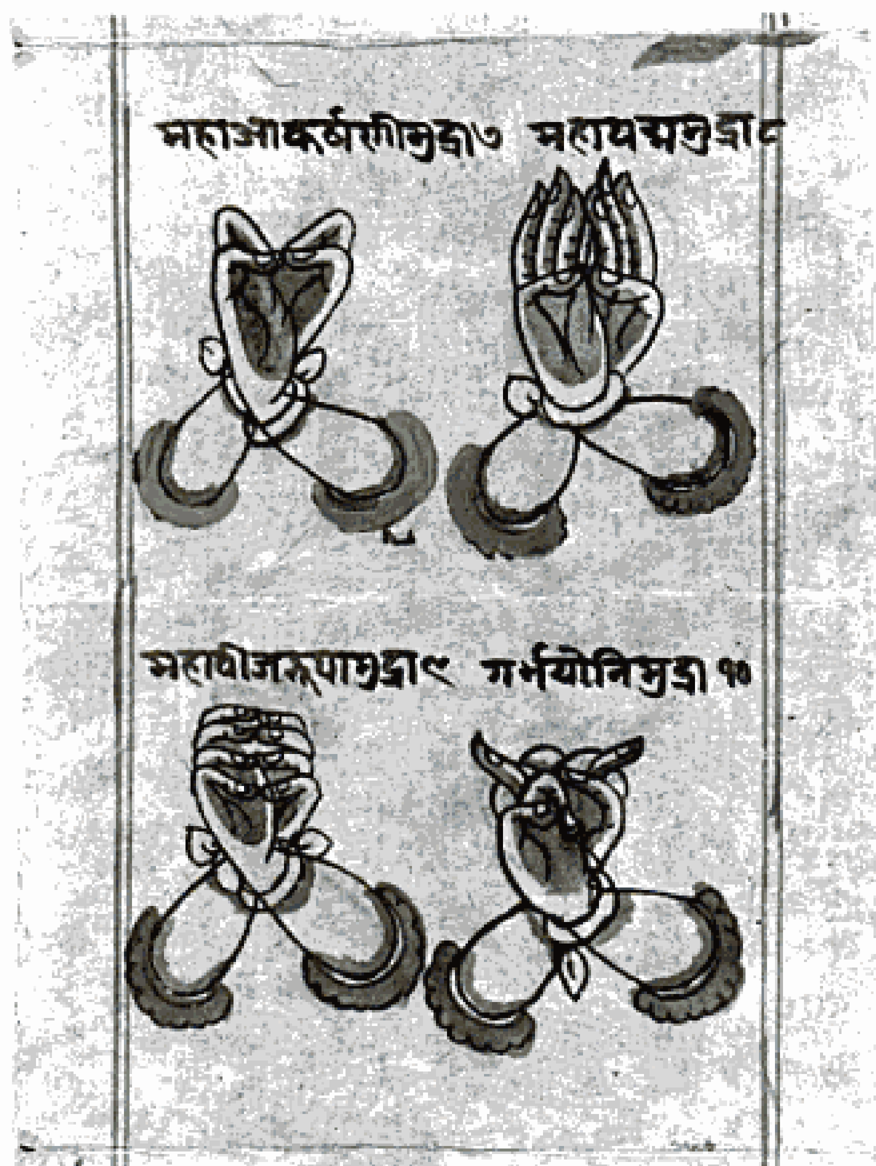
In two other folios are illustrated four colored diagrams related to architecture (*b*). Two diagrams, one consisting of 144 squares and the other of 121 squares, are *vāstumaṇḍalas* (paradigmatic configurations for the ground plan of buildings, both sacred and secular). In the diagram of the mandala of 144 squares is the superimposed figure of a man, whose hands form the gesture of adoration; he represents a *vāstupurusha* or "the archetype or ideal pattern of a house personified as a deity" (Monier-Williams 1964, p. 948). The other diagram is presided over by a *naga*. (These and other symbols of Indian architecture are discussed at length in Kramrisch 1946.) Two other diagrams illustrate the elevation and roof of a building and the ideal and auspicious placement of windows.

D26 *Book of Iconographic Drawings*



D26 Book of Iconographic Drawings
Late nineteenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 7 x 7 1/2 in (17.8 x 19.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.3

The entire book is copiously illustrated with iconographic drawings of Hindu and Buddhist deities. Among the Hindu deities represented are Bhairava, Dakshinakali, Ganesa, Hanuman, Krishna, and Siva (who is consecrating himself and the Ten Mahavidyas [see P33]). The Buddhist deities include forms of the Buddha, Lokesvara, Maitreya, Manjusri, Tara, and the four regents of the directions in their Tibetan forms. Perhaps the most unusual representation is that illustrated here. A priest with his tongue hanging holds the kettledrum with his right hand and triple-bell with his left hand as he approaches a dancing skeleton. The scene obviously depicts an occult rite, and the human figure probably represents a Kapalika, a member of a heterodox Saiva sect, who involve themselves with bizarre cultic practices.



D27 Book of Gestures
Late nineteenth century
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 1/2 x 5 1/4 in (9.0 x 13.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.4

Of the sixty-four pages (thirty-two folios), twenty-one are devoted to the *Mudrāprakaraṇa*. Of the remaining pages, thirty-two illustrate and identify specific hand gestures. The text, however, is not concerned primarily with gestures. It eulogizes Vishnu and his avatars and lists various heavens and hells; the cosmological divisions of the world; as well as the mountains, rivers, regions, and peoples of India. Fifty-six countries and their languages are also enumerated.

The illustrations of the gestures begin on the reverse and are preceded by the Sriyantra, the diagram that is special to the Great Goddess. The hands are drawn with thick black lines, and the palms are painted red. The ornaments are daubed in indigo and are not carefully delineated. Two gestures are illustrated on each page. The first nine gestures are associated with the Nine Mother Goddesses. Then follow sixty-four gestures in four groups of sixteen, each group symbolizing a direction dedicated to the sixty-four *yoginis*, who are emanations of the Great Goddess.



D28 *Book of Iconographic Drawings*
Late nineteenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 5 5/8 x 11 3/8 in (14.3 x 28.9 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.2

This book is interesting for the student of iconography because each of the thirty-six folios is richly illustrated with numerous drawings of Hindu and Buddhist deities as well as narrative themes. The latter consist of illustrations of the life of the Buddha in thirty-four panels and *avadānas* (Buddhist moral fables).

Among the more unusual drawings are twelve forms each of Vishnu, Siva, and Avalokitesvara, each form associated with one month. Also illustrated are twelve representations of the avatars of Vishnu and the eight most famous Sivalingas of Nepal identified with eight bodhisattvas, following no doubt the *Svayambhū-purāṇa*, a eulogistic text composed in Nepal in the fifteenth century to glorify the famous Buddhist shrine of Svayambhunath. The illustration shown here depicts the cosmic form of the Great Goddess with one thousand arms.

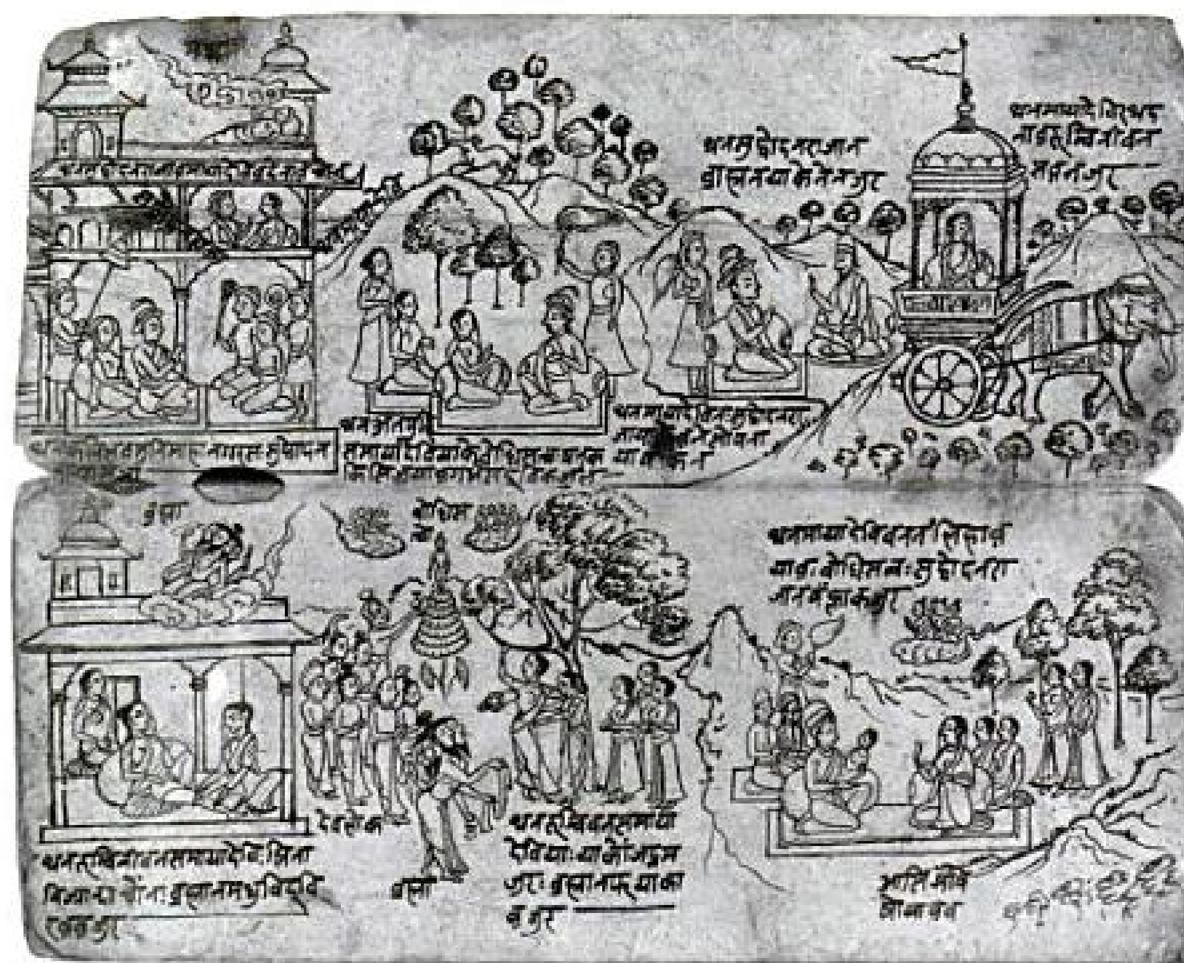


D29 Book of Drawings
Late nineteenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 8 1/4 x 4 3/4 in (20.9 x 12.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.4

The twenty-four pages of this book are sewn together like a modern book. Eighteen pages contain compositions of ragas and *raginis*, some of which are identified. The remaining pages are filled with sketches of various hand gestures.

In the upper left of the two pages illustrated here are two pairs of hands. In the lower left a warrior brandishing a sword stands on a cloud. The figure represents the Meghamallara raga. On the right-hand page, a tall, distinguished ascetic seated on an animal skin is listening to another ascetic play the vina while a ram-headed figure plays the cymbals. The listener is identified as Narada, the celestial musician and messenger of the gods. This composition may represent a raga or the frontispiece of a series of *ragamala* illustrations.

D30 Book of Iconographic Drawings
Late nineteenth century
Ink on paper
Average folio: 4 1/4 x 11 in (11.4 x 28.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.3



On one side of this book, consisting of thirty-seven folios, is an incomplete text about horses. Invoking Ganesa and Salihotra (an ancient sage and writer on veterinary science), the text is written in Hindi in the Devanagari script. The artist used the blank pages of the incomplete manuscript like a scrapbook on which to sketch his drawings. That this artist was a Newar is evident from the Newari inscriptions written on the narrative panels. Rather interesting is a page with color notations and their meaning. For instance, the letter *a* means *raktaturya* (red) and the letter *i* means *sindūra* (vermilion).

The drawings include *mahasiddhas*, Hindu and Buddhist deities, and various decorative designs. The most interesting drawings illustrate scenes from the last life of the Buddha and *jataka* (birth) stories narrating his previous lives. The folios illustrated here depict early events of the Buddha's life. The first composition shows Maya lying on the terrace of a pavilion and dreaming. The descent of the bodhisattva is shown in the form of a cloud. Next Maya tells Suddhodhana about the dream, who in turn consults a brahmin. Then Maya leaves in a chariot drawn by an elephant for the Lumbini grove. In the following page Maya and her attendants are first shown in a pavilion. The birth occurs below a tree. The final scene depicts the father admiring the infant he holds in his arms.

D31 *Book of Designs for Masks*



D31 *Book of Designs for Masks*
Bhaktapur (?); early twentieth century
Oil on paper
Average folio: 4 7/8 x 8 7/8 in (12.3 x 22.5 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.26

The eleven folios of this folding book contain designs or models for masks, which are generally made of wood or papier-mâché and brightly painted. Masks are used by Hindus and Buddhists during various ceremonies and sacred dances. These pictures have been painted in oil and varnished to a high gloss.

Each mask is depicted on a black ground and identified by a Newari inscription. Among the nineteen deities represented are various forms of Bhairava, including the famous white Bhairava of Kathmandu; Kumara; the Mother Goddesses; and various demigods. The two pages reproduced here illustrate the Mother Goddesses Kumari and Chandi. Apart from these models, the folios include smaller drawings of masks, tantric symbols, mantras, and diagrams.

This model-book may have belonged to a craftsman from Bhaktapur, where there is a tradition of making masks for celebrations in honor of the Navadurgas (see P9), who are identified with the Mother Goddesses (see Tailhet 1978). Masks are used during special religious dances performed during ceremonies observed mostly by farmers to ensure a good harvest.

Paintings



A painting is attractive when delineated with smooth and well-articulated lines, which are not devoid of proportions and grace and when the figures are appropriately attired and ornamented according to their country and status.

Vishnudharmottarapurana (fourth–seventh century)[1]

As there are so many types of painting, each with its own characteristic attributes, the paintings of the gods shall in the future grow many times in number.

Chitralakshaṇa (fourth–seventh century)[2]

Introduction

Manuscript illuminations constitute the earliest examples of Nepali painting in the collection. In Nepal and eastern India, no illuminated manuscript can be securely dated before the eleventh century. Although the earliest dated illuminated manuscript, copied in 1015, is Nepali, very likely the tradition originated in the Buddhist monasteries of Bengal and Bihar in eastern India.[5] Early manuscripts were written on palm leaves, a plant that is neither native to Nepal nor cultivated in the mountainous terrain but was imported from the riverine plains and coastal regions of India.

In India and Nepal, a manuscript consisted of narrow strips of palm leaves, each between twelve and eighteen inches long and no more than three to four inches wide. The text is written on both sides of the folios, which are held together by strings threaded through two holes punched on each folio. The manuscript is further protected by two narrow wood boards, which serve as covers. Usually one picture was painted in the middle of a folio, but sometimes a folio accommodates as many as three small panels. Other decorative touches were added around the punched holes or along the folio edges. The wood covers of the manuscript were also painted, often more sumptuously than the folios.

Most early illuminated manuscripts and their covers in the collection are Buddhist. Surviving examples in other collections indicate that Hindu religious texts were also illustrated, although the illuminations were confined primarily to the covers. The museum's collection possesses two very handsomely painted fifteenth-century manuscript covers of a Hindu text (P14). A comparison with contemporary Buddhist manuscripts and artists' model-books reveals that the same style was employed for both Hindu and Buddhist manuscripts. Buddhists were, however, far more interested in illuminating their manuscripts than were Hindus.

Most covers and selected folios of manuscripts are illuminated rather than illustrated. Frequently, the pictures bear little or no relation to the texts and consist of hieratic images of Vajrayana deities. The principal purpose of such iconographic pictures may have been prophylactic: the presence of the deities on the manuscript protected it from natural calamities and evil forces. Most illuminated texts are philosophical—such as the *Ashtasahasrika*, *Paramartha Namasangiti*, and *Prajnaparamita*—or ritualistic—such as the *Pancharaksha*. Although there are many texts rich in narrative content, only a few are illustrated. An exception is the richly illustrated *Gandavyuha* manuscript (P3), several folios of which are in the collection. Generally, the text expounds Mahayana philosophy but also contains narrative content, and the pictures adorning the folios relate directly to the text.

The most commonly copied and illustrated Buddhist manuscripts are the *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita* and *Pancharaksha*. The illuminations in both consist of iconographic pictures of deities. The *Prajnaparamita* is illustrated with formulaic representations of the eight great miracles from the life of the Buddha. Usually, these are the birth, enlightenment, first sermon, descent from the heavens, miracle of Sravasti, taming of the mad elephant, offering of honey by a monkey, and great passing away, or *mahaparinirvana*. The lively pictures on the covers of the *Prajnaparamita* manuscript dedicated in 1054 (P2), however, introduce interesting variations, which are discussed in the catalogue entry.

While considering early Nepali manuscript illuminations (between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries), it should be borne in mind that the tradition was essentially conservative, even more so than other forms of art. Just as the manuscripts themselves were frequently copied so also were the images. The diminutive size of the pictures was not conducive to experimentation or innovation. Moreover, manuscript covers may be replacements, especially covers of frequently used manuscripts. It is equally possible that an ancient manuscript remained untouched in the library of a monastery and, hence, the original covers were well preserved. Certainly, the excellent condition of some of the covers indicates that they were rarely handled.

Although manuscript illuminations in eastern India and Nepal belong to the same tradition, they do manifest subtle, although perceptible, stylistic differences. In both styles, the figures are clearly outlined against a flat background of red and blue. In general, the colors employed are the basic red, blue, yellow, white, and green. The colors differ, however, in intensity and tonality. For instance, the Nepali red is tinged with a touch of crimson, whereas a brighter vermilion is used in east Indian illuminations. Pigment shades in Nepali illuminations are generally more subdued than those used in east Indian examples. Similarly, noteworthy differences in the drawing of the figures are evident in the two styles. The outlines in Nepali pictures are drawn carefully with lyrical fluency, whereas in east Indian illuminations the drawing is freer and more animated.

The soft elegance of Nepali figures strongly contrasts with the more energized and lively figures in east Indian manuscripts. Likewise, landscape forms and architectural elements differ considerably. For example, only in Nepali illuminations is found a formula for the painting of rocks (P3a) that derives directly from the fifth-century Ajanta murals in India. East Indian artists rarely incorporated rocks into their compositions, and when they did, they employed a distinctly different formula.

The illuminations on the covers of the *Prajnaparamita* manuscript (P4) and rare *Paramartha Namasangiti* (P5) are examples of the kind of iconographic pictures that adorn such books and their covers. More elaborate are the representations of the Buddha and Pancharaksha deities in the early-thirteenth-century paper manuscript of the *Pancharaksha* (P6).

The eight principal events from Buddha's life were depicted in a similar fashion in Nepal and eastern India. The two covers in the collection (P2), however, offer fascinating iconographic and stylistic variations. Not only are these portrayals far more spirited than those seen in more conventional representations, but they present figural types distinctly different from the more typical Nepali figures. The unknown artist responsible for these illustrations was not simply a copyist; neither was he as careful a draftsman as his colleagues. His imprecisely drawn figures are informed with a spontaneity that makes them particularly vivacious. The artist obviously had a flair for the dramatic and displayed a strong idiosyncratic impulse by adding realistic and psychologically expressive touches, resulting in a refreshingly different interpretation of conventional themes.

Six folios from a dispersed manuscript of the *Gandavyuha* (P3) are rather unusual examples of early Nepali painting. These cryptic illustrations of descriptive passages from the *Gandavyuha* concern a young man's search for enlightenment. Despite their brevity and simplicity, the compositions are animated and engaging. Each illustration consists of only one or two figures, seated or standing. The principal figure is Sudhana, the hero of the book, who is engaged in conversation either with a human or divine teacher or an animal. Most encounters take place out of doors, as indicated by a tree or group of colorful rocks. The figures are always graceful and buoyant and the animals, lively and naturalistic. Indeed, the lyrical quality of these illustrations makes them among the finest examples of early Nepali painting.

The same vibrant and richly detailed style was also employed for the type of Nepali paintings known as *pata* in Sanskrit and *paubha* in Newari. The museum is particularly fortunate in possessing one of two surviving *paubhas* that may with some certainty be dated to the early decades of the thirteenth century (P7). The inscription suggests that it was made for a Tibetan patron, but a close comparison with the twelfth–thirteenth-century manuscript illuminations in the collection (P4–5) discloses that the *paubha* was rendered in the same basic style and by Newari artists. The figures and their dispositions—especially their swaying stances when sitting or standing—crisp and sure manner of the drawn outlines; color; tonality; and rich detailing and design of the throne are typically Nepali and may be easily traced in the manuscript illuminations.

Although not dated by inscription, two other *paubhas* in the collection (P8–9) may be assigned to the last quarter of the fourteenth century by a comparison with two dated paintings. One of these dated works is a Vasudhara mandala dedicated in 1367 and now in a private collection,[4] the other is the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11). The 1367 Vasudhara mandala is closely related to earlier manuscript illuminations, but the Vishnu mandala clearly reflects a different style. Not only have the forms and proportions of the figures changed but also their physiognomies and apparel. These differences become clearly apparent by comparing the female forms in the 1420 Vishnu mandala with those in the early-thirteenth-century *Pancharaksha* manuscript (P6). The body shapes and facial features are recognizably different. The two *paubhas* in this collection for which a late-fourteenth-century date is proposed share features with the 1367 Vasudhara mandala and 1420 Vishnu mandala.

One invariable feature of most *paubhas* made after 1367 is the inclusion of a scene of consecration with portraits of priests and donors drawn along the bottom of the painting. No such scene occurs in the earlier *paubha* of Ratnasambhava (P7). Indeed, such a scene is also not included in another *paubha* representing the goddess Tara, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, which probably was painted by a Newari artist around 1300, again for a Tibetan patron.[5] It is, of course, possible that such scenes of consecration are absent in these paintings because they are meant for Tibetan rather than Newari patrons. Usually, the priest, with one or two attendants, is seen offering oblations into the fire, while the donor and members of his family watch with folded hands. Also found in Buddhist paintings are the seven jewels considered auspicious and symbolic of a universal monarch. The jewels are the king, queen, minister, general, elephant, horse, and gem. Dancers and musicians are also sometimes added.

The five centuries between 1400 and 1900 are particularly well represented in the collection by a large and varied group of material. The *paubhas* are especially impressive for their diversity and excellence of content and style. Although most *paubhas* are Buddhist, three examples, and possibly a fourth, were rendered for Hindu patrons. The fragmentary painting of the Navadurga mandala (P9) may be Hindu or Buddhist. If it is a Hindu mandala, then this is the earliest example of a Hindu painting on cloth to have survived not only from Nepal but from the entire Indian subcontinent. If it is a Buddhist *paubha*, then that honor falls upon the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11). There are three other

paubhas in the collection (P25–26 and P30), which make the group of Hindu paintings particularly well represented. Apart from its impressive size, the seventeenth-century Vaishnava *paubha* (P26) is historically interesting as it was a royal consecration and rendered in the town of Bhaktapur. Few *paubhas* have survived that can be so certainly associated with royalty or a particular city. While several examples of Vaishnava *paubhas* have survived, those belonging to the Saiva faith are extremely rare. The representation of the Saiva temple (P30) is thus significant not only for its rarity but also because of its excellent condition and quality.

Although stylistic differences are perceptible from one period to another, all *paubhas* reflect certain common characteristics. The paintings are strongly figurative. In *paubhas* made before the seventeenth century, natural forms are illustrated only for their symbolic value and decorative effect. Elaborate thrones and shrines are incorporated into the composition for their ornamental effect and enhancement of the majesty of the principal deities. No effort is made to indicate spatial dimension within the picture plane. Light is uniformly distributed over the surface; shading and shadows are almost nonexistent. Figures stand and sit in prescribed, conventional postures, their hands holding their attributes gracefully or forming a few time-honored gestures. Usually drawn with flawless precision, the figures are attired in sumptuous garments and adorned with exquisite jewelry and crowns that augment their divine bearing. Apart from the clean, pellucid outlines of the figures, this art achieves its effect by the use of bold and vivid colors employed with sensitivity and zest. Indeed, it seems as if the figures, thrones, buildings, and lotuses are simply vibrant patches of colors mellifluently merged into "an harmonious whole, built up by a rhythmic interplay of lines and masses."[6] This rhythmic quality is further enhanced by the subtle use of a delicate, yet energized vegetal scroll pattern that pervades the background of most *paubhas* and may well be regarded as a hallmark of the tradition. It is also encountered in some earlier manuscript covers.

A second type of painting on cloth especially popular in Nepal is the handscroll, a superb example of which is in the collection (P34). Such scrolls invariably depict narrative themes with a clear didactic intent and were equally popular with Hindus and Buddhists. The earliest known example is from the seventeenth century; sketchbooks in the collection (especially D2) provide evidence that the history of narrative scrolls dates at least to the fifteenth century. Such scrolls are also familiar in India and other Buddhist countries, and literary evidence indicates that their history is older than Buddha Sakyamuni himself (c. 563–483 B.C.), who frequently alluded to such scrolls carried by itinerant storytellers. In Nepal these scrolls are now brought out and displayed in Buddhist monasteries on special religious occasions. In more ancient times, they must have been hung along the walls or supported on bamboo poles as the storyteller delivered his narration. The earliest lithic versions of such scrolls may be seen in the Buddhist stupas of Bharhut and Sanchi in India (second century B.C.–A.D. first century).

Paper was probably introduced into Nepal from Tibet sometime in the thirteenth century. Its use did not affect the shape of the manuscript immediately (see P5–6), which continued to follow the narrow, horizontal format of the palm-leaf manuscript. The only difference appears to have been in the slightly wider shape of the folio, as in the *Pancharaksha* manuscript, allowing the artist some scope for slightly more elaborate compositions. Otherwise, these representations differ little in style from the earlier centuries. By the fifteenth century, paper replaced palm leaf as the principal material for books, and as surviving evidence indicates a new type of book came into vogue in which the folios were joined edge to edge to form a folding book. Known as a *thyasaphu*, this type of book is richly illustrated with sketches and paintings.

While the *thyasaphu* seems to be a Newari invention, another type of painting—the album picture, following the preference of Mughal and Rajput artists—was introduced from India, probably in the seventeenth century. Although drawn on paper, these pictures were not made to fit into a manuscript or folding book. As a result, they do not conform to a particular size. The picture is painted on one side, and the relevant text is either confined to the margin or banished to the back of the sheet. The subject matter appears to have been secular and religious, consisting of literary themes, such as the *ragamala*; poetical literature (P23); erotica (P24); religious stories, such as the *Bhagavatapurana* (P35); texts eulogizing the god Krishna; and the epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Most illustrated Hindu religious texts are Vaishnava, but at least one such album series of the *Devimahatmya*, a text extolling the virtues of the great Hindu goddess Durga, is also known (P31). Buddhists, however, do not appear to have used album pictures, which were probably confined to the courts in emulation of the Mughals and Rajputs. Furthermore, surviving portraits of the monarchs of the period clearly reveal the kind of idealistic realism characteristic of Mughal and Rajput portraiture. The collection includes a fine nineteenth-century portrait of King Girvan Yuddhavikram Shah (P39).

By and large the Nepali painting tradition was figural, with the human form, either in its mortal or divine guise, predominating. Landscape elements, such as rocks and trees, were added symbolically to indicate locale. Assemblages of assorted, multicolored cubes with flame-shaped swaying tips representing peaks, the rocks themselves were creations of the imagination. The symbolic use of natural forms was not confined only to *paubhas* but was also applied to narrative scrolls and picture books. By the mid-seventeenth century, however, Newari artists increasingly emphasized natural forms, especially in narrative scrolls, album pictures, and occasionally even *paubhas* (P25, P30). In narrative scrolls (P34), scenes were placed against a background of continuous, undulating mountains distinguished by snowy peaks. The ground was no longer painted the ubiquitous red but was often green to create the illusion of grass. Sometimes (P35) the ground was painted a light brown with tufts of grass as in Mughal and Rajput pictures. Attempts were also made to delineate the sky with flying birds and floating clouds, forms that may have been borrowed from Tibetan paintings. Trees, however, continued to be employed decoratively, although a much greater variety is displayed in some paintings, particularly the splendid *paubha* of a Saiva temple (P30). Generally, trees and streams were deftly integrated into the composition of the narrative scroll both as topographical references and separators of depicted incidents.

The new influences from India or Tibet during the seventeenth century did not result in the development of a Newari landscape tradition. Indeed, although many artists painted pictures incorporating the evocative landscapes preferred by their Tibetan patrons (see D9), their own patrons in the Kathmandu Valley remained conservative. Despite the strong influences of the Mughal and Rajput tradition, by and large Newari artists were not concerned with such technical matters as depth of field or perspective. The artist simply replaced one form of background with another; mountains and trees, clouds and streams became more prominent, providing a topographical setting in which figures could perform their preordained roles. Nevertheless, after the seventeenth century, artists relied on a richer palette, natural forms were rendered with greater variety, and trees became more distinguishable. The figures in these pictures are attired in the Rajput fashion and interact with one another somewhat more naturalistically. Sometimes, the observer is even moved by subtle expressions of emotion as depicted in the exquisitely painted scroll illustrating a poignant Buddhist legend (P34). Although Nepali artists eagerly adopted the natural forms found in contemporary Indian and Tibetan paintings, they did so with a naïve curiosity and preference for the novel rather than an interest in the development of a landscape genre. While the artist's repertoire was enriched by new natural motifs and novel

conceptualizations, his vision of the world around him remained unaltered. Doubtless the natural elements in his pictures became more varied and their presence more ubiquitous, but they were still employed topographically or as stage props. The artist was not concerned with volume or perspective, with light and shade. Crisp outlines, vibrant colors, graphic clarity, and a simple, harmonious rhythm were of primary importance.

Most Nepali art is religious, and the few secular subjects date primarily from the seventeenth century or later. The surviving murals in the older palaces, none earlier than the seventeenth century, generally illustrate religious themes and there is no reason to suppose that earlier murals were different. Even if secular subjects were painted in Nepal earlier than the seventeenth century, they would have reflected the same style as the religious pictures. This is clearly evident from the scenes of consecration painted along the bottom of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *paubhas*. These ritual representations describe priests offering oblations, dancers and musicians performing, and donors and their families reverentially watching the proceedings. Even more fascinating is the fragmentary *paubha* of 1469 (P15), in which Vanaratna's wife distributes alms to a group of wandering yogis and beggars. The composition is not as hieratic and conventional as in a typical religious *paubha*, but nevertheless, the comparatively larger size of the principal female figure, her ritualized posture and gesture, as well as her form and demeanor are no different from those of a goddess, such as the Taras in the slightly earlier painting of Avalokitesvara (P8). Although a portrait, the rendering was not drawn from life. The group of yogis and beggars, however, are far more convincingly drawn and may have been directly observed.

Donor portraits abound in *paubhas*, but by and large they are formulaic and not true to life. After the seventeenth century, once again under the influence of the Mughal and Rajput traditions, attempts were made to distinguish the various kings whenever they were included in a *paubha* as in the Vaishnava painting (P26). The portraits, however, are so subtle as to be scarcely distinguishable; certainly the princes accompanying the king, differentiated by his larger size and snake canopy behind his head, are not drawn from life. All are idealized representations. Nevertheless, if this rendering of King Jitamtramalla is compared with his and other monarchs' portraits, the various personages can with some effort be distinguished. Although not too many examples are known — some may lie buried in the storehouses of ancient palaces—royal portraits were doubtlessly commissioned after the seventeenth century following Mughal and Rajput traditions. Some portraits, such as P39, are so close to the Mughal original that they may have been painted by Indian artists.

Summary

No Nepali paintings of the Lichchhavi period have survived, although epigraphical evidence indicates that murals did adorn temples of the period. The earliest examples of painting date to the Transitional period and consist largely of Buddhist manuscript illuminations. Although they are stylistically related to east Indian manuscript illuminations, the Nepali manner is readily distinguishable. Diminutive pictures were painted on narrow palm leaves and wood manuscript covers. No example of a religious painting on cloth dates beyond the Early Malla period. Only three *paubhas* with some certainty can be dated to the early thirteenth century, and one is in the museum's collection (P7). These *paubhas* are closely related stylistically to contemporary manuscript illuminations.

Most surviving Nepali *paubhas* were painted between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many are dated by dedicatory inscription, and, hence, the history of painting of this period is better recorded than that of sculpture. The museum's collection contains several dated examples, including the earliest dated Hindu *paubha* in the world (P11). It was during this period also, perhaps in the second half of the fourteenth century, that a new style emerged, probably as a result of the emerging sense of national

consciousness generated during the rules of Jayasthitimalla and Yakshamalla. This distinctly Nepali style seems to have reached its apogee during the fifteenth century.

The Early Malla period also witnessed a decline in the tradition of manuscript illumination, especially among Buddhists. Conversely, during this period the folding book, made of paper and known as *thyasaphu*, was introduced, and this seems to have been a Newari invention. Hindu themes based on divine images and religious myths are more preponderant in these books than in earlier manuscripts. Scant pictorial evidence survives to indicate that Newari artists were aware of the various styles of painting prevalent in northern India during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Certainly neither the Jain nor the Indo-Persian painting styles seem to have influenced Nepali artists. Nepali paintings of this period are of special interest to historians of Indian painting because they demonstrate the continuous development of a tradition, whereas in India, except for Jain mandalas, almost no examples of cloth paintings, either Hindu or Buddhist, have survived earlier than the fifteenth century. Thus, Nepali pictures from the Late Malla period in general and fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in particular are especially interesting for the history of Indian painting.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, Newari artists seem to have been influenced by both Indian and Tibetan traditions. Of the two, the Indian tradition proved to be the stronger. The influence of Mughal and Rajput traditions was not confined to royal and secular subjects. Artists began to incorporate into religious pictures motifs and mannerisms derived from Indian styles. Landscape elements appear to have been borrowed from Mughal, Rajput, and Tibetan paintings and integrated into a formula that became typically Newari as is particularly evident in narrative scrolls. Figures and their attire were adapted from Mughal and Rajput pictures, although primarily for secular and mythological subjects rather than for divine images. The picture album, with the text confined almost as marginal notes, was a form adopted from the Mughal and Rajput traditions, as were new themes based on *ragamalas* and literary and poetical works. Tibetan and Indian traditions contributed to the considerable expansion of the Nepali palette, prompting artists of the period to employ a much wider range of pigments and modeling. The pictorial tradition in Nepal continued to be lively into the Shah period, which coincided with the rise of British power in India. While the domestic architecture of the valley came under European influence, the religious arts, including painting, remained untouched by European ideas.

Notes

1. Shah 1961, 1: 145.
2. Quoted in Goswamy and Dahmen-Dallapiccola 1976, p. 75.
3. For a general survey of the history of painting in Nepal, including manuscript illumination, see Pal 1978.
4. Pal 1976, p. 59, no. 43.
5. Ibid., p. 56, no. 40.
6. A. Grabar, *Byzantine Painting* (New York: Rizzoli International, 1979), p. 128.

Catalogue

P1 *Fragment of a Folio from an* Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita *Manuscript* *Color plate, p. 55*



P1 *Fragment of a Folio from an* Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita *Manuscript*
Eleventh century
On palm leaf
Folio: 2 1/2 x 5 in (5.7 x 12.7 cm)
Illustration: 2 3/8 x 1 15/16 in (6.0 x 4.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.1.22
Literature: Tucci 1949, pl. A; Pal 1966, p. 106, no. 114.

This fragmentary folio, recovered from a Tibetan monastery by Giuseppe Tucci, contains one of the liveliest illuminations encountered among Nepali manuscripts. The illustration appears on only one side of the fragment; the text is finely written in a clear and bold script in six lines on both sides. The illumination depicts one aspect of the enlightenment miracle of Buddha Sakyamuni. It evidently formed the left-hand section of a three-panel representation; the Buddha would have been depicted in the middle with other attacking demons on the right. A comparison with the more complete enlightenment composition on the cover (P2) clearly shows how much more sophisticated and graphic is this segment. Led by Mara, the only crowned god at the top, the demons are ferocious in their attack upon the Buddha. All have frightful faces, and some have additional faces on their stomachs. These are mythical creatures known as *udaremukha* who appear in early Buddhist art in India. The demons breathe fire, spit out snakes, throw rocks, and hurl skeletons. They are painted reddish brown, yellow, and blue; some have blue or green faces.

Along the bottom is a thick, sinuous, yellow vine outlined in red; the background is filled with a faint scroll pattern of pink and mauve. Despite the age of the fragment, the colors are brilliantly preserved. Even more extraordinary is the skill with which the artist has made the little composition dynamic and monumental by emphasizing the diagonal and effectively overlapping the spirited figures.



P2a–b



P2a detail

P2 *Two Covers of an* Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita *Manuscript*
Manuscript dated 1054
On wood
Each: 2 1/8 x 22 1/8 in (5.3 x 56.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.77.19.1a–b
Literature: Tucci 1949, p. 327, pl. B; Kramrisch 1964, pp. 102–3, 143; Pal 1978, pp. 45–46, fig. 22.

These two covers once belonged to a palm-leaf manuscript of the *Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita*. According to Tucci (1949), the date written in the manuscript colophon corresponds to 1054. If indeed these covers were painted at the time the manuscript was copied, then they are among the earliest known surviving examples of Nepali painting.

Typical of *Prajnaparamita* manuscript covers, the paintings illustrate scenes from the life of Buddha Sakyamuni. The unknown artist has introduced certain deviations from the conventional group of eight miracles generally illustrated in *Prajnaparamita* manuscripts. The eight episodes beginning with Sakyamuni's birth are not arranged in chronological order, except for the scene of his death, which is placed at the end of the second cover.

The first cover (*a*) is divided into three sections by two vertical lines. The first section on the left takes up almost half the cover and illustrates two different episodes. The artist has preceded the nativity with the miracle at Samkisya, when the Buddha, after turning the wheel of the law at Sarnath, proceeded to the heavens to preach the religion to his mother. On his return to earth to a place called Samkisya, he was accompanied by the gods Indra and Brahma, but here the artist has also added Siva and Vishnu. Thus, the figures on the Buddha's right are Brahma with three heads and Siva, and on his left are Indra holding the parasol and Vishnu, who is given the dark complexion of Krishna.

This scene is separated from the next by a tree below which the miracle of the birth takes place. Following the established convention, Sakyamuni's mother, Maya, supports herself by holding onto a branch with her left hand and placing her right arm on her sister's shoulder (see detail). The Buddha emerges from her left hip. Immediately follows the scene in which the Buddha takes his first seven steps, signifying his spiritual sovereignty. The occasion is represented by the placement of the Buddha on a pyramid of lotuses as was the custom, but here again the artist has introduced a novel feature. Flanking the Buddha are the gods Brahma and Indra, the former with a basket of grain and the latter with a fish. Both fish and grain are auspicious symbols in Nepal and parts of India and are invariably present on special occasions, such as birth and marriage ceremonies.

The next composition depicts Sakyamuni's enlightenment below the bodhi tree at Bodhgaya. While he was meditating, Mara, the Buddhist god of desire (standing here on the left of the panel with a bow in his left hand), and his companions attempt to distract and tempt Sakyamuni. Sakyamuni, however, resists the temptation and as he is alone calls upon the earth to witness his victory. Thus, his extended right hand touches the lotus on which he sits. The thunderbolt attached to his seat is a metaphor for the Buddha's unshakable resolution and is also a symbol of Vajrayana Buddhism.



P2b detail

In the last panel on this cover is represented the offering of honey to the Buddha. The Buddha, holding the bowl of honey, is seated below a tree and watches as the monkey proceeds to jump into a well. Because his offering to the Buddha was considered a supreme act of piety, the monkey was released from the chain of rebirth and in the next panel is shown flying on a cloud to the heavens.

In the second cover (*b*), the first panel on the left represents the Buddha's taming of the mad elephant Nalagiri. In the right half of the composition the Buddha, accompanied by a monk, stands before a kneeling elephant. Above the elephant is a row of prancing lions, which, according to Kramrisch (1964), symbolizes the power of Sakyamuni, who is often referred to as the lion of the Sakyas. More difficult to explain is the scene on the left in which a couple worship a stupa.

The next composition depicts the miracle of Sravasti, when the Buddha multiplied himself to confound the heretics. This scene is usually represented by simply showing three seated figures of the Buddha, but here the artist has added a partial shrine to the left and three seminaked figures who are thrown in disarray by the miracle. These are obviously the heretics confounded by the Buddha.

The next scene (see detail) is perhaps the most curious for it represents the miracle of Muchalinda, which is generally not included among the group of eight miracles. The act belongs to the enlightenment cycle and is commonly depicted adjacent to Mara's temptation scene. The episode occurred during the Buddha's period of withdrawal and meditation when a violent storm broke and the serpent-king Muchalinda spread out his hoods to protect the Buddha. Here two additional *nagas* offer baskets of grain to the master. In such images the Buddha is usually shown with his hands placed on his lap as is appropriate for meditation, but here his hands form the gesture of turning the wheel of the law. Curiously, this important act of the Buddha, which he performed at the deer park in Sarnath, is one of the traditional eight miracles, but it is not represented here. The artist seems to have combined it with the Muchalinda episode.

The final episode depicts the *mahaparinirvana*, the physical demise of Sakyamuni. This event occurred in Kusinara, where the Buddha is said to have eaten some contaminated pork or poisoned mushrooms and died of food poisoning. Several monks and a lady surround the Buddha, who lies outstretched on a couch. A dark bodhisattva, whose identity is uncertain, is seated on a cushion at the far end of the cover.

Fascinating as these covers are for their iconographic peculiarities, they also present unique stylistic features. In comparison to other eleventh-century illuminations, the drawing here is much freer and livelier. The outlines have been drawn with quick, bold strokes, and the details are not as meticulously rendered as in most Nepali illustrations. Some compositions—such as the scenes of enlightenment, the miracle at Sravasti, and the *mahaparinirvana*—are among the most elaborate Nepali manuscript illuminations. A few depictions also reveal psychological insight; note particularly the poignant scene of the monkey's generosity, disarray of the heretics in the representation of the Sravasti miracle, and the mourning monk attending the *mahaparinirvana*.

P3 Six Folios from a Gandavyuha *Manuscript*
Twelfth century
On palm leaf
Each: 2 1/2 x 21 3/4 in (6.4 x 55.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection;
M.70.1.1a–f
Literature: Kramrisch 1964, pp. 100, 144; Pal 1978, pp. 47–48, figs. 35–36.

a. A Deity with Three Elephants
2 x 2 1/2 in (5.1 x 6.4 cm)

b. Sudhana in a Landscape
2 x 2 in (5.1 x 5.1 cm)

c. Manjusri and Sudhana
2 x 2 7/16 in (5.1 x 6.2 cm)

d. Dancing Cupid
2 x 1 15/16 in (5.1 x 4.9 cm)

e. Sudhana and a Deer
2 x 2 1/8 in (5.1 x 5.4 cm)

f. A Night Goddess Instructing Sudhana
2 x 2 3/4 in (5.1 x 7.0 cm)


P3a


P3b

These six leaves are from a now dispersed manuscript of the *Gandavyuha*, one of the most important and popular texts of Mahayana Buddhism in Nepal. It expounds Mahayana Buddhist doctrine by narrating the peregrinations and spiritual experiences of a youth named Sudhana. Sudhana's pilgrimage or search for supreme enlightenment begins and ends with the bodhisattva of wisdom, Manjusri. The *Gandavyuha* was often illustrated in China and Japan, but perhaps its best known depictions are the famous Borobudur reliefs in central Java. The Nepali manuscript, to which these six leaves once belonged, is the only known copiously illustrated example from south Asia.

Because the representations are cryptic and do not always relate to the text on the particular page on which they appear, illustrations cannot be precisely identified. The goddesses, ascetics, and monks can be generally identified readily because of their halos; as a mere mortal, Sudhana does not have a halo. When he is in the presence of a deity as in illustrations *c* and *f*, Sudhana usually kneels or sits on the ground, while the divine figure sits on a cushion. In other illustrations (*b* and *e*), Sudhana is shown by himself or with an animal, and these scenes are more difficult to identify.

Although the text on leaf *c* is from chapter 1, the illustration depicts Sudhana, who is not introduced in the text until chapter 3, when Manjusri selects him as the youth destined for enlightenment. The text on leaf *d* is from chapter 43 in which Sudhana's instructor (*kalyanamitra*), Gopa, the wife of Buddha Sakyamuni, is introduced. The illustration depicts a lively dwarf of pale green complexion dancing with a bow and arrow. This is obviously the Indian cupid who plays a role in an anecdote narrated by Gopa in which a girl and a prince fall in love in a park. The text on leaf *f* belongs to chapter 36 in which Sudhana visits a night goddess named Praśāntarutasāgaravatī.

Although the illustrations are cryptic, they are refreshingly animated and attractive. The svelte, graceful figures stand out in clear relief against their background, which in many instances is



P3c



P3d

enlivened by conceptually rendered trees and rocks. Even though no conscious effort has been made to suggest depth of field, in some illustrations, such as *a* and *e*, the placement of animals and trees creates a spatial dimension within the picture plane. In contrast to the stylized trees and rocks, the animals are rendered with remarkable naturalism. The formula used in describing the rocks derived ultimately from India is typically Nepali and was employed both for relief sculpture (S8) and painting. Here, however, the artist has attempted to indicate the volume of the rocks by making it appear as if the formations were projecting from the picture surface. One curious feature characteristic of the artist responsible for these illustrations is that in several compositions (*a–c*) the background is filled with tiny black dots to create a pointillist effect. It is not clear whether these dots represent rain or a night scene or are simply an aesthetic affectation. This pointillist effect is employed invariably in compositions with a blue background; the other background color—the ubiquitous red—is used in the usual flat manner. In a few compositions with the red background (*f*), however, a narrow, irregular strip along the top is painted blue and is speckled with tiny red and white flowers, evidently to indicate a shower of flowers from the sky.

Except for the night goddesses, who have blue complexions, and the dancing cupid, whose dull white complexion is highlighted with light green shading, most figures have pinkish flesh tones and are outlined in red. Hair is rendered in black, often with stylish curls, and the garments are represented with a wide variety of floral motifs. Rocks and cushions are painted various shades of blue, yellow, pink, and mauve, which highlight the visual appeal of these colorful and animated illustrations.



P3e



P3f





P4a–b



P4b detail

P4 *Two Covers of a* Prajnaparamita *Manuscript*
On wood
Twelfth century
Each: 2 3/8 x 22 5/16 in (6.0 x 56.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.1.19c–d

Each cover is divided on the inside into three segments by narrow bands decorated with red and yellow scroll patterns. In the middle of each band is a hole through which was passed the cord that tied the manuscript together. The background color of each cover is red. The outside of the covers is left plain.

The central panel of the top cover (*a*) contains a seated Buddha flanked by three bodhisattvas on each side. Of an orange yellow complexion, the Buddha wears a red robe and displays the turning of the wheel of the law gesture. He is supported by a gray cushion and surrounded by a white aureole. Placed on either side of him are offerings, which are effaced but appear to be the same objects illustrated on the back cover. The bodhisattvas sit in identical positions, and each makes the teaching gesture with his right hand. Each also holds a lotus with his left hand, but the attributes placed on the flowers vary. This difference, together with their distinct complexions, facilitates identification of the figures. The white bodhisattva at the extreme left is Samantabhadra. Beside him is a red black Vajrapani, while the third figure, of yellow complexion, is Ratnapani. The fourth figure on the other side of the Buddha, although extensively damaged, may be identified as Avalokitesvara. The next figure, of green complexion, holds the double-thunderbolt and is Visvapani. Although indistinct, the object on the flower of the last figure appears to be a book, and, thus, he should be identified as Manjusri. The others are the five bodhisattvas of the Five Tathagatas.

The central figure on the second cover (*b*) is the goddess Prajnaparamita, which likely indicates that the manuscript contained by the covers was the *Prajnaparamita* text. Seated on a lotus against a blue cushion, she has four arms. Her two principal hands form the gesture of turning the wheel of the law. The upper right hand holds the rosary, and corresponding left hand grasps a manuscript. On either side of her are several ritual objects and offerings, including two conches, a vase, grains or flowers, and what appear to be candles or lamps.

Her six female companions are seated and attired identically, but their attributes differ. The figure on the extreme left is white, but the object she holds cannot be identified. The next is a gray black goddess who holds a sword in her right hand. The third figure is also white and holds a ring in her right hand. The fourth figure on the other side of Prajnaparamita is white and does not hold any attribute in her right hand, which is turned toward the body and forms the teaching gesture. The next figure is red and forms the meditation gesture with her hands on her lap. The last figure is green and assumes the gesture of adoration.

Because the six are companions of Prajnaparamita, it is tempting to identify them with six of the twelve Paramita goddesses, who are personifications of the twelve perfections described in the text. With one exception, however, the representations do not agree with known descriptions of the goddesses. The exception is the second figure; her dark complexion and sword are appropriate for one of the Paramita group as described in ancient iconographic text (Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 327).

The figural forms on these covers are typical of Transitional-period manuscript illuminations. The outlines are drawn firmly in black, and the colors are smoothly and evenly applied. Almost no shading is used to indicate volume, which is suggested by the asymmetrical position of the bodies and contrast of the skin coloring with the coloring of the aureole. The slight tonal variation of the complexion of the darker figures enhances the plasticity of the forms. Altogether the figures exude a sense of quiet elegance and dignity.



P5a



P5b



P5c



P5d



P5e

P5 Five Folios from a Paramartha Namasangiti *Manuscript*
C. 1200
On paper
Each folio: 3 x 11 1/8 in (7.6 x 28.2 cm)
Each illustration: 2 3/8 x 2 1/2 in (6.0 x 5.4 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. P. Pal in memory of Herbert Cole; M.82.153.1–2
Gift of Peter Smoot in memory of Herbert Cole; M.83.7.1–3

These five illuminated folios written in pale gold on black paper are from the *Paramartha Namasangiti*, a Mahayana Buddhist text. The exact date of the text is not known, but it is generally believed to have been composed sometime around the sixth century (Mukherji 1963). The text consists of a laudatory hymn in honor of the bodhisattva Manjusri and is also known as *Aryamanjusrinamasangiti* or simply *Namasangiti*. It was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese and Tibetan and was extremely popular with Nepali Buddhists.

The five folios in the museum's collection fortunately include both the first and last pages of the manuscript (*a* and *e*). The last page contains the colophon, which identifies the man who commissioned the manuscript (see Appendix) but does not give a date. The donor was the merchant (*sarthavaha*) Kirtipala. The original manuscript consisted of thirty-six folios or seventy-two pages.

The illustration on page 1 (*a*) depicts the Buddha, who is said to have imparted the text at the request of Vajradhara, lord of secrets. Appropriately, therefore, the Buddha is shown seated and preaching, symbolized by the turning of the wheel of the law gesture. The figure illustrated on leaf 3 (*b*) is the bodhisattva Vajrapani, who is painted blue. His right hand forms the teaching gesture against his chest; attached to his right arm is an open lotus. His left hand holds the stem of a blue lotus that supports the thunderbolt.

The next leaf (*c*), page 16, depicts bodhisattva Namasangiti, obviously a deification of the text itself. This identification is corroborated by the verse portion of the text consisting of laudatory hymns. The deity is painted red and has twelve arms. The hands are positioned according to the following sequence (beginning at the bottom): the first pair of hands is held in the lap and supports a consecration vase into which is inserted the second pair of hands. The third pair is held against the chest in the gesture of reassurance (*abhayamudra*), and the fourth pair makes the gesture of oblation (*tarpanamudra*). The fifth pair holds two long staffs that support (on the right) the thunderbolt placed on the blue lotus balanced upon the wheel. The final pair of hands with interlocking fingers is raised above the head.

The figure on page 35 (*d*) is a rare form of Manjusri. His body is white, but his principal face is blue. The face on his right is white, that on his left is red. Three more heads are piled up above, and they are in ascending order red, yellow, and green. The red face assumes a terrifying appearance. He has, however, only two hands, which are placed on his lap in the meditation gesture. Two lotuses rise on either side; the lotus on the bodhisattva's left bears a manuscript. Primarily because of this attribute, the figure may be identified as Manjusri.

The last leaf (*e*) contains a conventional representation of the bodhisattva Vajrasattva. Painted white, he holds the thunderbolt with his right hand and the bell with his left hand.

Since the location of the remaining leaves of the manuscript is not known, it is difficult to surmise whether it contained only these illustrations. The deities were not illustrated at random for they relate directly to the text passages in which they are mentioned explicitly.

The figures are closely related to the *Pancharaksha* manuscript illuminations (P6) and other paintings of the late-twelfth–early-thirteenth century. This date is also confirmed by the writing style, which is very similar to that seen in a manuscript copied in 1165 and now in the Cambridge University Library (Bendall 1883, pl. 2.2). The highly ornamental script is known as Ranjana. As in the *Pancharaksha* illustrations, the figures are very carefully and finely drawn (compare the two representations of the Buddha), and the colors in both have the same tonal values. Volume has been suggested by highlighting the blue and yellow with white and the white with tinges of blue. Enhancing the liveliness of the compositions are the fine scrollwork on the aureole and circular designs on the cushions placed behind the figures.

P6 *Three Folios from a* Pancharaksha *Manuscript* *Color plate, p. 59*

P6 Three Folios from a Pancharaksha *Manuscript*
Early thirteenth century
On paper
Each folio: 2 5/8 x 16 1/2 in (6.7 x 41.9 cm)
Each illustration: 2 5/8 x 6 1/4 (6.7 x 15.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.1.25a–c
Literature: Pal 1966, pp. 107–8, no. 118; Pal 1978, p. 50, fig. 27; Larson et al. 1980, p. 56 (*c* only); Pal 1981, pl. 3, fig. 4 (*b* only).

a. Buddha Sakyamuni

b. Goddess Mahasitavati

c. Goddess Mahasahasrapramardini

These three leaves from a thirteenth-century *Pancharaksha* manuscript contain elaborate and sumptuous illustrations of Buddhist subjects. The manuscript was written on paper dyed in indigo; the faded text was originally written in yellow. The illustrations are distinguished by their unusual size, each composition being considerably larger than the average palm-leaf illumination.

Each illustration is bordered by two wide strips filled with floral patterns and symbols. Each principal deity is set off against an aureole above which are clusters of leaves. A tree (banana in *a–b*, date palm in *c*) stands behind each



P6a



P6b



P6c

side figure. Moreover, in each composition the monochromatic background (red in *a*, blue in *b–c*) is enlivened with tiny flowers symbolizing the divine realm.

In illustration *a*, the yellow figure of the Buddha is clad in a red robe and seated on a mauve lotus on a throne supported by two green horses. Behind him is a blue cushion. His aureole is white with a yellow border streaked with red flames. His right hand is outstretched in the gesture of charity, his left hand rests on his lap. He is flanked by two crowned and bejeweled male figures who are seated in a relaxed manner on cushions and appear to be listening to a discourse. The figure to the Buddha's right is yellow, the other is red. The inclusion of the Buddha is not unusual in *Pancharaksha* manuscripts, for he is said to have recited the five charms or spells that constitute the text.

The goddess in the second illustration (*b*) is Mahasitavati and not Mahapratisara as has been suggested (Pal 1981). Painted green, she is seated on a lotus against a red aureole outlined by a yellow border marked with stylized flame motifs. While her primary face is green, her right face is white and her left face is red. Her attributes, beginning at the top left and clockwise, are the bow, staff supporting a jewel, rope and gesture of admonition, gesture of teaching (against her chest), thunderbolt, and arrow. On her right, a kneeling devotee is shown adoring the goddess. On her left, a demon with featherlike red hair turns away from her completely and is attempting to cover his face. Sitavati protects her devotees from dangerous animals and insects.

While Sitavati has a pleasing countenance, Mahasahasrapramardini is a more awesome figure. Her corpulent body is painted blue, and her four faces are made terrifying with fangs, rolling eyes, and raised eyebrows. The four heads (left to right: white, blue, green, yellow) have the same hairdo of bright orange hair. Her fiery aureole is composed of leaping red flames. She tramples two naked figures; on her right is a human, and on her left is an animal-headed demon. Both figures are unable to bear the effulgence of the goddess as is evident by their postures and raised hands. The demon, however, turns his head toward the goddess and snarls at her.

The borders of illustration *a* are decorated with red and white flowers on the blue-black ground of the paper. The borders of the other two illustrations are painted red and white. Those in illustration *b* are embellished with the auspicious fish motif in rondels and flowers, those in illustration *c* are decorated with white peonies and star-shaped floral designs.

These illustrations are both elaborate and animated. The introduction of the frightened figures in two illustrations of the goddess enhances the drama of these unusual pictures. While the central figures are portrayed with hieratic impassiveness, the side figures are remarkably natural and lively. The unknown artist's fluent draftsmanship and adept manipulation of bright colors make these illustrations especially appealing.



Detail

P7 *Buddha Ratnasambhava and Acolytes*
Early thirteenth century
On cotton; 16 1/8 x 13 in (41.0 x 32.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.81.90.5
Literature: Pal 1975, pp. 32, 73; Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1975, no. 19; Pal 1978, pp. 67–68, figs. 68–69.



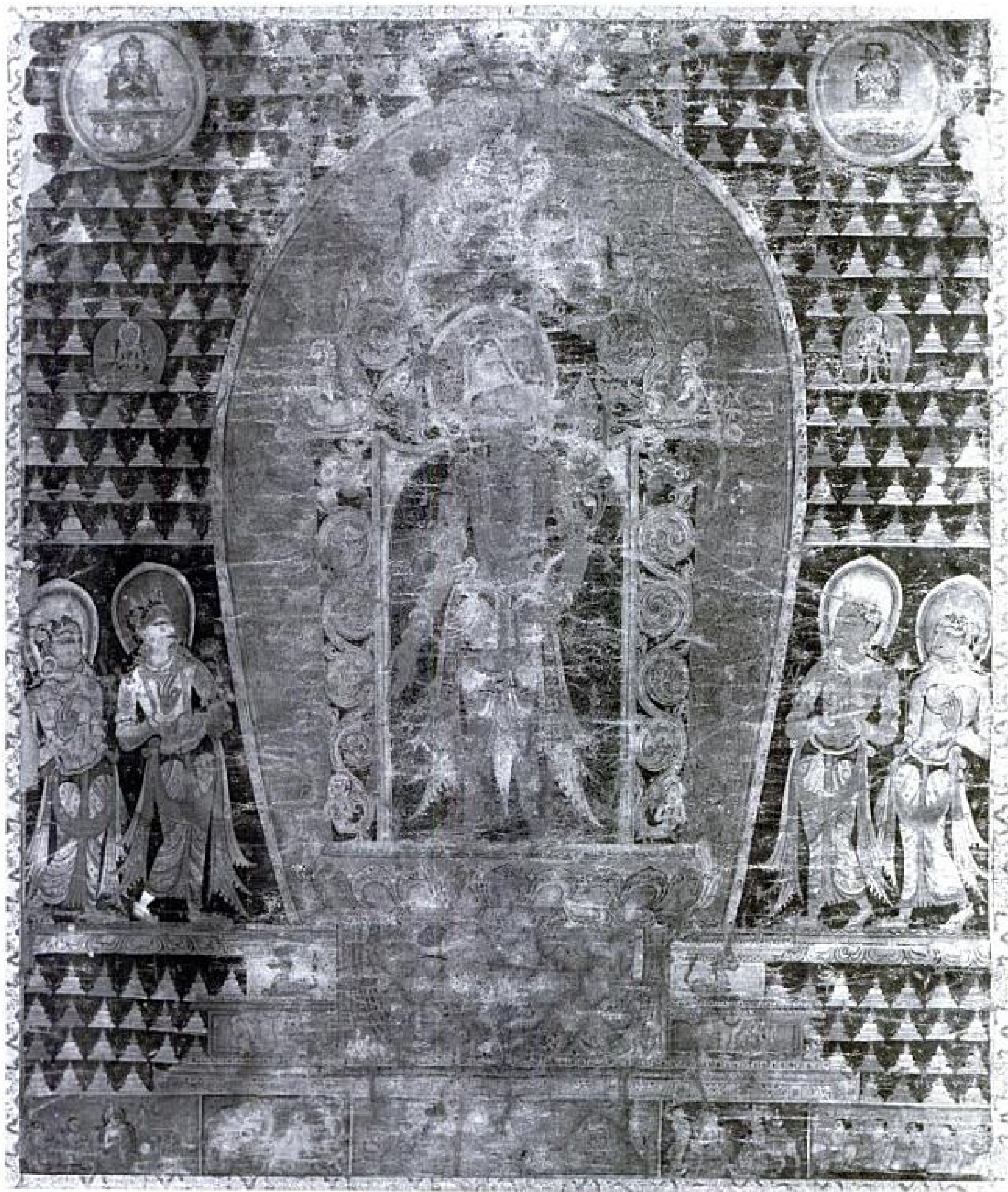
The mate to this painting is in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Pal 1978, fig. 70). The pair must have once belonged to a series of paintings of the five transcendental Buddhas (*tathagatas*). Since each central figure is shown in splendor with elaborate crown and jewels, thereby symbolizing the *sambhogakaya* (body of pleasure), it may be assumed that the series was once used for rites related to the Yogatantra.

In the middle of the *paubha*, Ratnasambhava, the yellow Buddha, is seated on a richly delineated throne. He can be identified by his complexion, gesture of charity formed by his right hand, two horses on the throne base, and three jewels set against the overhanging carpet. The jewels are flanked by a pair of antelopes. Ratnasambhava is surrounded by eight bodhisattvas, two of whom stand gracefully on either side of the throne, while the others are seated above, three on each side of the arch.

Along the top of the *paubha* sit eight Buddhas, four yellow and four red, each forming different gestures with their hands. The exact identification of these Buddhas is uncertain. Along the bottom are several deities seated or standing in a variety of postures. The green figure on the extreme left is Tara, while the deity in the center appears to be Avalokitesvara. The two deities between Tara and Avalokitesvara are male, while the other three deities are female.

This beautiful *paubha* has been dated to the late-twelfth or early-thirteenth century. In a recent publication (*Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, p. 148) an eleventh-century date has been suggested for the Boston example. Although the painting shares some stylistic features with eleventh-century manuscript illuminations, so early a date for the pair seems unlikely. The closest stylistic parallels for the figures in the *paubha* may be seen in the *Pancharaksha* illuminations (P6). This manuscript and its pictures cannot be dated earlier than 1200. The slightly awkward stance of the standing figures and summary modeling of the female forms are incompatible with eleventh-century illuminations. The *paubha*, however, is considerably earlier than the earliest known dated example: a Vasudhara mandala painted in 1367 (Pal 1975, pp. 58–59). An early thirteenth-century date is also corroborated by the paleography of the inscription giving the Buddhist creed on the back of the painting.

Whatever its exact date, there can be little doubt that, along with its mate in Boston, this exquisitely painted *paubha* represents the earliest example of painting on cloth to have survived from Nepal. That the series was executed by a master painter is evident from the superb quality of both paintings. The details—whether of the furnishings, clothing, or ornamentation—are rendered with exquisite sensitivity and refinement. The elegant figures and lively animals are drawn with firm but fluid lines. The colors have a warm, rich tonality, and their smooth texture imparts a clarity and translucence that make this *paubha* among the finest examples of Nepali painting.



P8 The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and Four Taras
1375–1400
On cotton; 23 5/8 x 20 in (60.0 x 50.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.77.19.4
Literature: Pal 1978, pp. 70–71, fig. 77.

The center of the *paubha* is occupied by an elaborate shrine containing an image of Avalokitesvara. The red figure of the bodhisattva is set off against a blue ground, and the columns and arches of the shrine are composed of richly rendered scrolls in gold. The shrine is surrounded by an oval aureole densely packed with interconnected lotus flowers set in a red background framed with a thin blue border fringed with flame motifs. Richly clad and ornamented, Avalokitesvara holds the lotus with his left hand and forms the gesture of charity with his right hand. The shrine rises from a stepped base, partially draped by a carpet decorated with lotuses. Avalokitesvara is approached on either side by four goddesses whose complexions (from left to right) are blue, white, red, and green. With her left hand, the blue goddess holds a blue lotus supporting the thunderbolt and forms the teaching gesture with her right hand. The white and red goddesses hold pink lotuses, and their hands form the turning of the wheel of the law gesture. The green goddess holds a blue lotus with her right hand, while with her left hand she forms the preaching gesture. Very likely these four are emanations of the goddess Tara.

Much of the remaining area of the *paubha*, except the four vignettes in the upper half and register along the bottom, is covered with multicolored stupas. The two multiarmed figures—the one on the left is seated and painted red, the one on the right is painted white—represent emanations of Avalokitesvara. At the top on the left is the moon-god Chandra and on the right is the sun-god Surya. The register below contains typical scenes of consecration.

Although somewhat damaged, this is an important *paubha* because of its iconography and early date. Rarely is Avalokitesvara represented with the four Taras and multiple stupas. The stupas very likely symbolize the Lakshachaitya rite, whereby a donor earns merit by dedicating one hundred thousand (*laksha*) chaityas or stupas. Generally in such commemorative *paubhas*, the central deity is Ushnishavijaya rather than Avalokitesvara. The bodhisattva wears a miterlike crown, which is less oval than that seen in an early image of Vajrapani (S6) but is similar to that worn by Indra in Nepali art (S42).

The harmonious juxtaposition of figures and miniature stupas makes the composition unusually striking. The busy scrollwork of the throne and gracefully swaying figures with their swinging garment ends contrast effectively with the repetitive design of the stupas and overriding symmetry of the composition. The predominant colors are red and dark blue; the use of gold for the shrine is unusual in Nepali painting.

P9 *Navadurga Mandala*

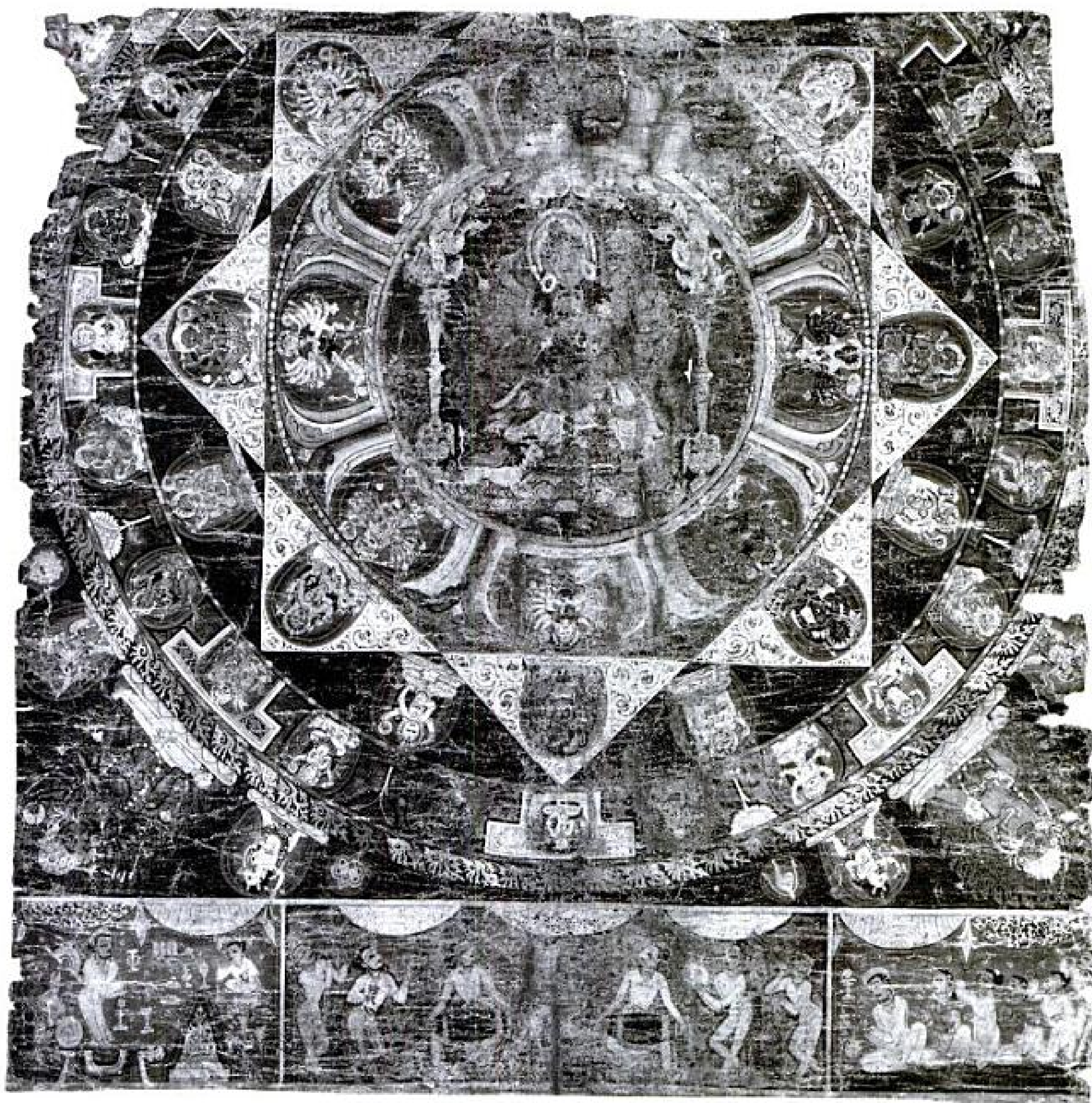


Detail

P9 Navadurga Mandala
1375–1400
On cotton; 20 x 20 1/8 in (50.8 x 51.1 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.72.53.10
Literature: Pal 1978, fig. 75; Pal 1980, p. 79; Pal 1981, pp. 45–46, fig. 16.

Although partially damaged, the painting is a rare example of an early Hindu mandala, few of which appear to have survived. In addition, it is the only example of a Navadurga mandala known from this period.

Except for their different complexions, the Nine Durgas are represented identically in the pericarp and eight petals of the central lotus. Each goddess has eighteen arms and rides the lion as she pierces the demon Mahishasura with her trident. The central lotus is superimposed on two intersecting squares producing eight triangles in the corners. These triangles and eight interstices contain sixteen representations of the Mother Goddesses. The outer circle with flaming perimeter is inhabited by the Eight Guardians of the Directions, each seated within a gateway and flanked by a pair of goddesses, some of whom are dancing, but most are seated. Beyond the fiery fringe in the two lower corners are two more terrifying goddesses flanked by animal-headed attendants (see detail, top). Presumably, two other similar groups resided in the upper corners of the mandala. The exact identification of these subsidiary goddesses is uncertain.



The concept of the Navadurga is known from Indian religious texts (see Pal 1981), but their names and iconography vary considerably. In Nepal the group appears to be unstable and is often identified with the Mother Goddesses (Slusser 1982, 1: 322–23) perhaps due to confusion rather than conviction. The iconography of the Nine Durgas as represented in this mandala is distinctly different from the iconography of the Mother Goddesses represented in P25. Peculiar also to the religious eclecticism in the valley, the Navadurgas are worshiped by Hindus as well as Buddhists.

Despite its condition, the mandala was without doubt prepared sometime toward the end of the fourteenth century. Stylistically, it falls between the 1367 Vasudhara mandala (Pal 1975, pp. 58–59, fig. 43) and the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11). This relation becomes particularly apparent by comparing the dancers, musicians, and donors in this mandala with those in the Vasudhara mandala. In both examples, these slim figures are remarkably alike and are characterized by a lively elegance (see detail, bottom). The drawing in the Navadurga mandala, however, is not as fine as in the Vasudhara mandala and seems closer to the rendering of the Vishnu mandala.



P10a

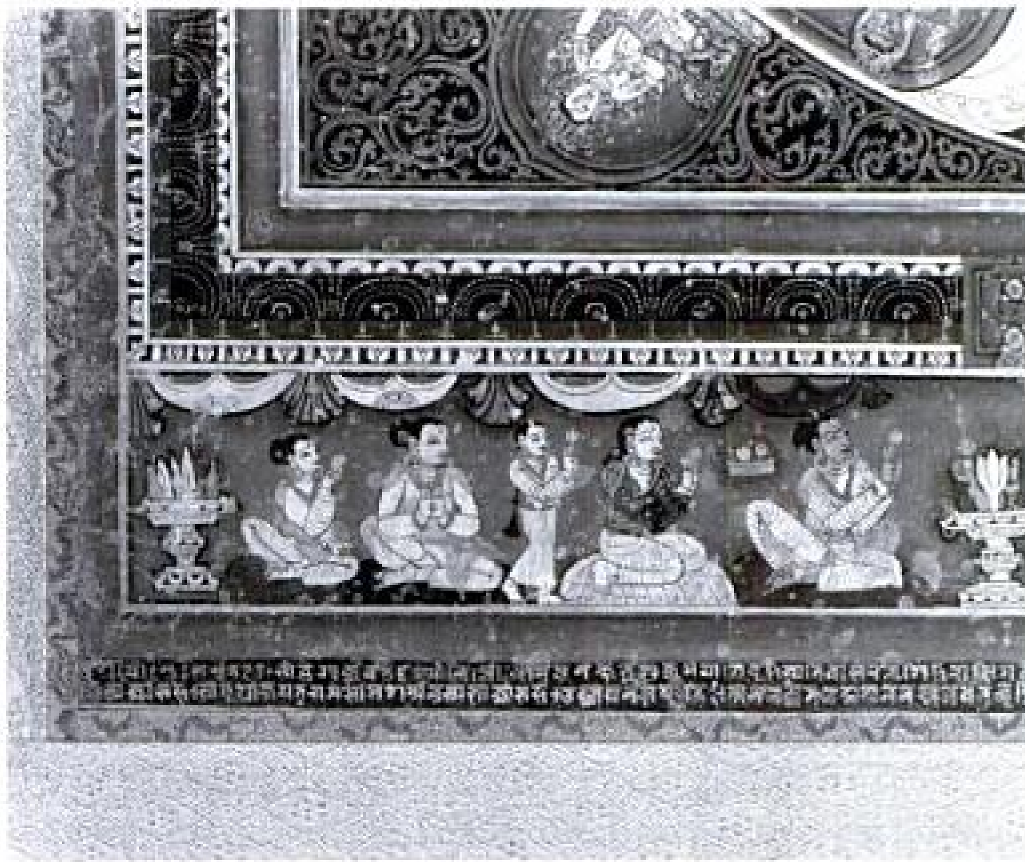


P10b

P10 Book of Astrology and Omens
Fourteenth–sixteenth century
Ink and watercolor on paper
Average folio: 3 1/2 x 9 3/8 in (8.9 x 23.8 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.9

The book consists of forty-eight folios with text and illustrations on both sides of the page. It appears that two texts were written at different times, both relating to astrology and ill omens. The first text to which the illustrations relate is written in the Bhujimol script of the fourteenth or fifteenth century. The colophon does not, however, identify the text, and unfortunately the first numeral of the date has been effaced. The second and third numerals are nine and six. One chapter is entitled *arishṭa-bhaṅga* (breaking an ill omen). The shorter text is written in the Newari script prevalent during the second half of the sixteenth century.

The illustrations are of fine quality and are colored. They consist of circular diagrams used in rites to ward off evil and misfortunes; mandalas devoted to the planets; beautifully rendered lotuses, vases, swords, and tridents; and various animals and birds identified as the *nakshatras*, or stars (*a*). The folios illustrated here depict a colored flowering vase called *kalasachakra* (*b*) and a lotus circle called *padmachakra*.



Detail

P11 Vishnu Mandala
Jayateja (active c. 1420)
Dated 1420
On cotton; 29 1/4 x 24 1/4 in (74.2 x 61.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.77.19.5
Literature: Pal 1966, pp. 110–11; Pal 1975, pp. 80–81, fig. 80; Pal 1978, fig. 1.



For many reasons this is one of the most important paintings in the collection. Not only is it the earliest dated Hindu painting known to date, but the artist is identified (see Appendix).

The Sanskrit inscription along the bottom of the *paubha* states that the work was completed in ten days by the artist Jayateja Puna. The Newari word *puna* means "painter," and very likely Jayateja was a professional. Of great interest is his claim that he finished the painting in ten days. Jayateja's patrons were Tejarama Somasarman and his brother Jayatarama, both of whom were brahmins. This *paubha* was consecrated in the year 1420 after a successful performance of the Anantavrata, a rite that has remained very popular with Nepali Vaishnavas. The inscription further states that to celebrate the occasion the donors also dedicated a book and an image.

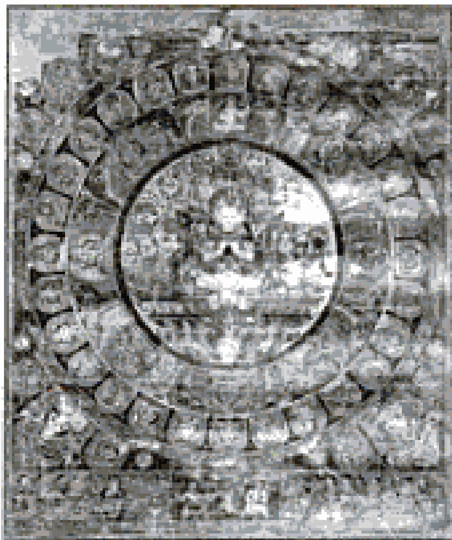
In the center of the lotus, against a background densely filled with an exquisitely rendered scroll design, the white Vishnu is seated on the coils of the serpent Ananta (endless) whose multiple hoods form a canopy above the god. In his four hands Vishnu holds the lotus, conch, club, and wheel. He is accompanied by his spouse Lakshmi on his right and his mount, Garuda, on his left. The hands of Garuda, who is painted red, form the adoration gesture; Lakshmi, painted green, holds two lotuses, which support the vase and mirror. In the twelve petals surrounding the pericarp are twelve representations of the standing Vishnu, each accompanied by a form of Lakshmi. All twelve Vishnus hold the four attributes in varying combinations and have different complexions (red, yellow, white, or blue). Only one goddess is green; all others are either red or yellow. These twelve emanations of Vishnu very likely preside over the twelve months, for the Anantavrata is generally performed annually.

Outside the lotus, but within the square citadel of the mandala, are the eight directional deities represented in pairs at the four corners. In two corners are added images of Brahma and Vishnu, probably representing the upper and nether regions. Each of the four gateways of the citadel are protected by a pair of ferocious guardian deities. Each segment of the citadel is painted red, yellow, blue, and green. Along the top is a register with various Hindu deities who may be identified as (left to right) Surya, Ganesa, Siva and Uma, missing, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Karttikeya and Chandra. The missing deity was very likely Brahma with his spouse. Along the bottom is the traditional panel showing Tejarama with his brother and other members of his family participating in the rituals (see detail).

The white pigment on Vishnu's chest has peeled off to reveal the underlying geometric structure of the mandala. The center of the mandala coincides exactly with the center of Vishnu's chest. Although the artist Jayateja was limited in his choice of colors by iconographic instructions, he wielded his brush with sensitivity to create a luminous composition of pleasing colors. The detailing is particularly fine, and one can hardly fail to admire Jayateja's accomplishment in finishing this mandala in ten days, a fact he would have unlikely mentioned unless it was unusual.



Detail



P12 Chandra Mandala
C. 1425
On cotton; 26 3/4 x 23 1/2 in (68.0 x 59.7 cm)
Gift of Jerry Solomon and Purchase, Indian Art Special Purposes Fund; M.83.113

Notwithstanding the damage along the top, this is a fine *paubha* depicting the mandala of Chandra, the moon-god. The central tableau represents the white Chandra riding his chariot drawn by seven ganders. Wearing a blue jacket, Chandra holds two lotuses. In front of him is his charioteer, and on either side are his two wives. At each corner of the chariot is a female shooting arrows of light to dispel the darkness. Surrounding this central composition is a lotus circle with images of the eight other planetary deities, thereby making this a Navagraha (nine planets) mandala with Chandra as the presiding deity. Surrounding this circle of the eight planetary deities is a circle of twenty-eight stars, or *nakshatras*. The stars are personified as female and the planets as male. Beyond the ring of fire circumscribing the mandala are other deities and symbols. At the four corners are four bodhisattvas who are seated on elaborate thrones. Except for one who is seated on a lion and may represent Manjusri, the other three cannot be identified precisely. Each is flanked, however, by two of the Eight Guardians of the Directions. The symbols are the eight auspicious emblems of Buddhism: white parasol, two fishes, conch, lotus, banner, wheel, and endless knot.

That the mandala is Buddhist rather than Hindu is further evident from the fragmentary image of the Buddha still attached at the top. There must have been also a row of Buddhas along the top corresponding to the register along the bottom. This lower register is divided into three panels. In the panel on the left a *vajracharya* wearing a crown and monk's red garment is offering oblations into the fire. Immediately behind him an assistant holds a manuscript. Next are several seated figures, mostly female, who may represent members of the priest's family. In the central panel a much effaced figure is dancing to the rhythm provided by two musicians. The devoutly seated figures in the third segment represent the donor and members of his family.

Although the *paubha* does not contain an inscription, it can be convincingly demonstrated that it was painted sometime in the first half of the fifteenth century. Stylistically, it is very similar to the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11) and to another Chandra mandala in a private collection dedicated in the year 1426 (Pal 1974, fig. 81). In all three mandalas almost an identical type of figure has been used to depict the females. Indeed, the two Chandra mandalas are so similar that they may have been painted in the same workshop. This particular example may have been painted somewhat earlier than the 1426 *paubha*. The bold scrollwork in white and maroon behind the central figures; extremely well-executed and naturalistic ganders pulling the chariot; and generally fine delineation of garments, thrones, and lotus petals indicate the artist responsible for this *paubha* was a master painter.



Detail

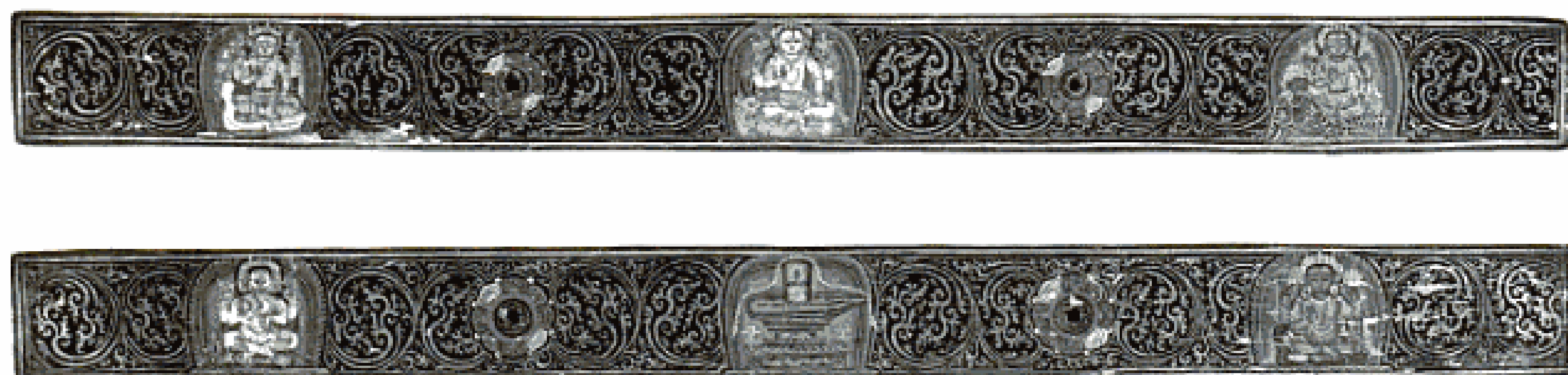


P13 Samvara and Vajravarahi in Union
C. 1450
On cotton; 54 x 45 in (137.2 x 114.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.70.1.3
Literature: Pal 1975, p. 79, fig. 32; Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1975, no. 20; Pal 1978, fig. 90.

Both for its quality and excellent state of preservation, this painting is one of the most impressive in the collection. The greater part of the painting is occupied by a red aureole of flames, which strikingly sets off the blue figure of the god Samvara in union with his red partner or prajna, Vajravarahi (see S65). The aureole is filled with exquisitely rendered scrollwork and is fringed with cutworklike stylized tongues of flame in blue, orange, red, green, and white. Except for their animal skins and bone and skull ornaments, both figures are naked. Samvara's legs trample upon the red goddess Kalaratri and the blue Bhairava, emanations of the Hindu goddess Durga and Siva, respectively. Vajravarahi's legs encircle her spouse's waist in a passionate embrace as her left hand holds the skull-cup and her right hand brandishes the chopper. Samvara has four heads, each with a third eye and colored, from left to right, white, blue, green, and red. The four heads presumably represent the four directions. Two of his twelve hands are crossed in front as they hold the bell and thunderbolt; two more stretch the hide of a white elephant. The other attributes are (on his right) the drum, battleax, chopper, and trident; (on his left) the severed heads of Brahma, noose, skull-cup, and cot's leg. The hands that hold the ax, trident, noose, and cot's leg also form the gesture of admonition. Within the aureole are included four other goddesses and flowering vases. The broad lotus petals forming the base are multihued.

On either side of this central tableau are the eight traditional cremation grounds, which are so crowded that they can hardly be distinguished from one another. With some difficulty one can isolate the seated figures of the eight guardians and their spouses, each of whom presides over a cremation ground. The cremation grounds denote the phenomenal world and are packed with scavenging animals, trees, bones, corpses, stupas, and *mahasiddhas*. Indeed, although diminutive, these marginal representations are scenes of bustling activity rendered with great technical skill. Two red *yoginis* occupy two vignettes in the upper section of the cremation grounds, while two more goddesses are included at the two corners of the register of figures along the top. The ten other figures included in this row represent various forms of Samvara and important deities of Vajrayana Buddhism, such as Hevajra, Heruka, Yogambara. Along the bottom of the *paubha* are still other forms of Samvara and the *yoginis*.

A mid-fifteenth-century date for this fine painting can be firmly established by a comparison with dated published material (Pal 1978, figs. 91, 93) as well as with the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11). Further corroboration can be obtained by comparing the murals in the Gyantse temple in Tibet painted by Nepali artists at the beginning of the fifteenth century (Karmay 1975). As in the murals, the dark figures of Samvara and Bhairava below Samvara's left foot are painted two different shades of blue to impart a sense of volume to the forms. The heads of the two principal figures here and the studies of similar heads in a fifteenth-century sketchbook (D1) are remarkably similar. Indeed the artists responsible for this painting or the sketches may well have been involved in rendering the murals at Gyantse.



P14a–b

P14 Two Covers of a Saiva Manuscript
C. 1450
On wood; 2 1/8 x 23 1/4 in (5.4 x 59.1 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. P. Pal; M.80.155.1a–b

These two beautifully painted covers once belonged to a palm-leaf manuscript of an unknown Saiva text. The prominence given to Siva in the center of both covers (see details) identifies the work as a Saiva manuscript. The covers are adorned on the outside with lightly delineated, meandering floriate scrolls interspersed with two lotuses with multihued petals contained within a beaded border. In the pericarps of the lotuses are two holes through which were passed the strings that held the manuscript together. Both covers are varnished on the outside.

The background of the covers is filled with the same scroll motif that appears on the outside, but on the inside cover the design is rendered with greater animation and elegance in two contrasting blues. Against this striking background are placed two brightly delineated multihued lotuses, and against the red aureoles on each cover are three images. In one cover (*b*) are Ganesa, a Sivalinga, and Karttikeya; in the center of the other cover (*a*) is Siva flanked by Brahma and Vishnu.

Elephant-headed Ganesa, painted white, is seated on the rat. His attributes are the rosary, radish, cup, and battleax. The Sivalinga is painted blue and rises from a finely executed lotus base. Three eyes are drawn on the shaft, which is also adorned with a string of pearls. The plump, red Karttikeya sits on his peacock and holds peacock feathers, rosary, vase, and spear. The yellow Brahma on the left of the other cover is seated on the gander. His emblems are the rosary, teaching gesture, waterpot, and club. The pot and teaching gesture are, therefore, common to all three deities, and both are unusual for Vishnu.

A mid-fifteenth-century date for the covers can be firmly suggested by a comparison with the 1420 Vishnu mandala (P11). Especially noteworthy is the exquisitely delineated scrollwork in both paintings and monumental Samvara (P13). The figures on the covers also are similar to those seen in the Vishnu mandala.



Detail



P15 Vanaratna's Wife Distributing Alms
Dated 1469
On cotton; 27 1/4 x 39 1/4 in (69.2 x 99.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.77.19.3
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 110; Pal 1978, pp. 22–23, fig. 7.

Although faded and partially preserved, this is one of the most important surviving Nepali paintings. The appearance of the work when it was originally made can be determined from a nineteenth-century copy now preserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan (Pal 1978, fig. 8). The upper half of the copy depicts one of the past Buddhas, accompanied by monks, other Buddhas, and *mahasiddhas*. The composition in the lower half of the section preserved here depicts a livelier scene with Vanaratna's wife (the large lady on the right holding a lotus with her left hand) distributing alms to a group of yogis, mendicants, and beggars. Vanaratna had made similar gifts during his lifetime, and, upon his death, his wife continued the tradition in respect of her husband's memory. Although the Sanskrit inscription (see Appendix) does not record the occasion for which this painting was commissioned, very likely it was painted to commemorate the postfunerary Śrāddha rite performed in honor of the deceased.

In the inscription, Vanaratna is addressed as Vanaratnapa. The suffix *pa* is generally used by Tibetans as an honorific and is commonly appended to names of *mahasiddhas*, such as Luipa, Naropa, and others. It is an abbreviation of the Sanskrit *pada*, which literally means "foot," but when added to a proper name or title denotes respect. This Vanaratna is undoubtedly the great Indian Buddhist teacher who went from the Chittagong region in Bangladesh to Nepal and Tibet. His life and teachings are briefly narrated in the Tibetan historical work *The Blue Annals*, and he is considered to be the last great Buddhist teacher to have gone to Tibet. Apparently he settled in Nepal, where he married a Nepali woman (thus he was not a monk) and was associated with the Govichandra Mahavihara, a monastery in Patan known today as Pintu-bahil.

Although describing a religious act, this fragmentary *paubha* is a unique example of a fifteenth-century secular picture. The portrait of Vanaratna's wife is obviously idealized; not only is she the largest figure, but by placing the lotus in her left hand, the artist identifies her with the goddess Tara. She is surrounded by many women, some of whom watch the ceremony from above, perhaps seated on balconies. A lady in the foreground is either feeding or playing with a bird. While this group of figures has been depicted hieratically, the group of yogis and ascetics is arranged in terms of a more naturalistic use of space. Not only do the figures represent a wider variety, but the two conversing yogis in the lower left-hand corner are so lively and expressive that they may have been drawn from life. Indeed, the entire group, including a mother and child, offers a convincing representation of a crowd eager in its anticipation of receiving gifts from a gracious lady. By Nepali standards, this is indeed a rare and vivid depiction of a historical event.



P16 Chakrasamvara Mandala
C. 1475
On cotton; 31 x 26 1/8 in (78.7 x 66.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Slusser; M.83.258

Although greatly damaged, this *paubha* is interesting both for its fifteenth-century date and mandala configuration. Generally, a mandala is rendered in a combination of circles and squares (cf. P17–18), but here the subsidiary deities are disposed around the central couple in a rectangle. With some minor variations, the mandala is similar to the better preserved 1590 mandala (P19).

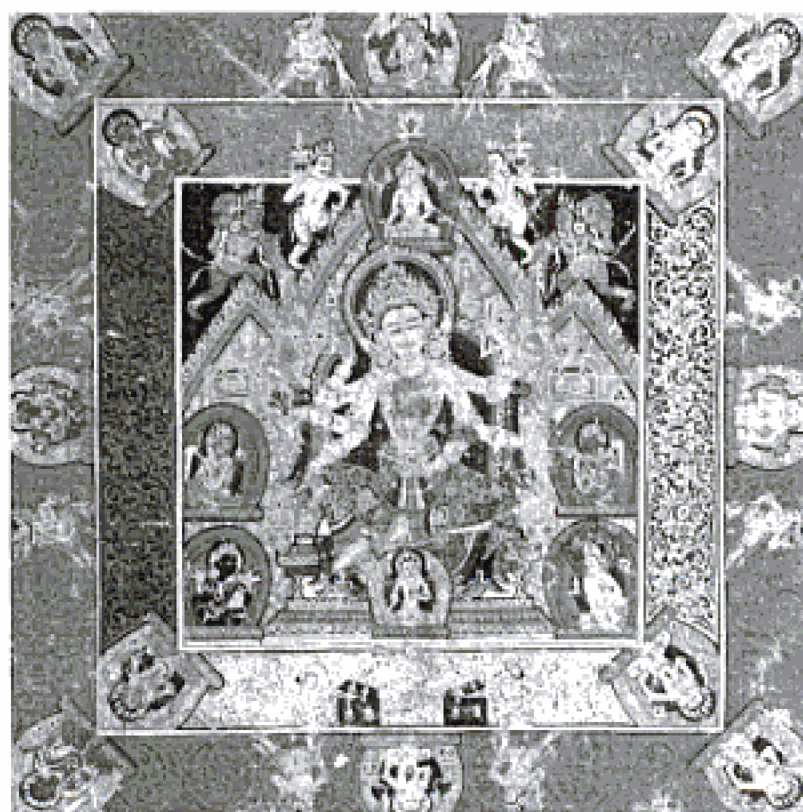
A comparison with the slightly earlier Samvara *paubha* (P13) demonstrates two noteworthy differences. The attributes are disposed differently in Samvara's hands, and the cremation grounds are not included in this mandala. In the 1590 mandala (P19), the figures are represented in various circles; in this example they are distributed in cartouches surrounding the central pair. The four guardian deities with bird and animal heads—Kakasya (East), Ulukasya (North), Svanasya (West), and Sukarasya (South)—are placed in the middle of each register. Twenty-four other deities are distributed in groups of four on each side of the *paubha*. Of the four directional goddesses—Dakini (East), Lama (North), Khandaroha (West), and Rupini (South)—only two are included here against the flaming background at the level of Samvara's knees. Two of the four protective deities—Yamadahi, Yamadamshtri, Yamaduti, and Yamamathani with their double-complexions—occupy the two corners in the register below the lotus on which the principal figures stand. Eight goddesses who are not depicted in the other mandala are also included in this register.

Along the bottom are the customary scenes of consecration and idealized donor portraits. In the left panel, a crowned red-robed priest is offering oblations into the fire. Seated behind him are a female (presumably the priest's wife), a monk, and a lay figure. Next is an image of the Vajrayana deity Achala, an angry manifestation of the bodhisattva Vajrapani. In the central panel are seated the principal donor and his spouse on either side of an auspicious vase with plants. The usual scene of dancers and musicians is not depicted. In the next frame is the protective deity Mahakala. A row of adoring figures, presumably members of the donor's family, is included in the remaining panel.

Despite its condition, the *paubha* is stylistically similar to the much better preserved painting of Samvara (P13). Had it been as well preserved, its colors would have been just as scintillating. The drawing in this painting, however, is not as refined as in the other example.

P17 Vasudhara Mandala

Color plate, p. 67



Detail

P17 Vasudhara Mandala
Kathmandu; c. 1495
On cotton; 43 1/2 x 33 1/8 in (110.0 x 84.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection
Museum Associates Purchase; M.77.19.7
Literature: Trubner 1950, fig. 146; Kramrisch 1964, pp. 110, 149–50; Pal 1978, figs. 97–98.

The inscription at the bottom of the painting states that this mandala was dedicated in 1495 (N.S. 615) in the city of Kathmandu by metalsmith or -trader (*tamrakara*) Jakhasimha along with his wife and children when Ratnamalla and Indramalla were kings. The artist or the scribe evidently made a mistake in naming the two kings (see Appendix). Ratnamalla's coruler, for a brief time, was his brother Arimalla and not Indramalla as stated in the inscription. The only ruler bearing a form of the name Indra in the Kathmandu royal family is Mahendramalla, who ruled eight decades later. The painting and writing styles are, however, consistent with the 1495 date.

The basic configuration of the mandala is similar to those depicted in two other *paubhas* of about the same period (P18–19). The perimeter circle of the mandala is divided into eight segments by the thunderbolt motif; each segment includes a representation of one of the Eight Guardians of the Directions accompanied by attendants and various Buddhist symbols. Additional divine images, representing the Five Pancharakshas (see P6) and their attendants, are placed outside the mandala in the four corners and bottom center of the painting. Moreover, the Five Tathagatas and several bodhisattvas and protector deities are included in the uppermost register of the painting. In the lowermost register are the usual scenes of consecration and the seven jewels.

Another significant feature of this *paubha* is the detailed depiction of a didactic story in little panels immediately surrounding the mandala. When the rite of the goddess is performed, it is customary for the donors and members of the

congregation to listen to edificatory tales extolling the merit of worshiping Vasudhara. One such story, known as the Suchandra *avadana*, is depicted here in considerable detail and identified by Newari inscription. Some panels are slightly larger than others, and the representation is generally flat but graphic. Trees and architectural forms are frequently used to indicate locale. While the trees are stylized and decorative, the architecture is reproduced faithfully. The beginning of the narrative cannot be pinpointed, but very likely it starts to the right of a panel containing three deities in the center of the register at the top. The story is briefly retold, as follows.

A wealthy merchant named Suchandra had several sons who held high offices at the court in the city of Kausambi. The youngest son was the black sheep of the family. Not only did he squander all his patrimony by bad speculations and loans, but, instigated by a wicked man, he once stole two bricks from a chaitya and kept them hidden at the entrance of his room. This act resulted in fraternal quarrels, loss of wealth, and dissolution of the family. Realizing his folly, the young man wanted to see the Buddha but had nothing to take as an offering. His wife gave him a bit of chain, which she had found at the opening of a rathole, and with this he bought some flowers. Pleased with his devotion, the Buddha instructed him to perform a rite in honor of Vasudhara, and thereafter the son regained his wealth and prosperity.

P18 *Amoghapasa Lokesvara Mandala*

Color plate, p. 68



P18 Amoghapasa Lokesvara Mandala
Dated 1542
On cotton; 36 x 27 in (91.4 x 68.6 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener; M.72.108.2

According to the inscription, this mandala of Amoghapasa Lokesvara was dedicated in a monastery (the name is illegible) by the *vajracharya* Bharasana and members of his family upon the successful performance of the Ashtamivrata rite on the eighth day of the lunar fortnight of the month of Magha (January–February) in the year 662 of the Newari era (see Appendix).

Amoghapasa Lokesvara stands in the center of the mandala with his four acolytes: the two standing females are the goddesses Tara and Bhrikuti, the two male figures kneeling at his feet are Sudhanakumara and Hayagriva. Surrounding the central tableau are the eight bodhisattvas Gaganaganja, Khagarbha, Kshitigarbha, Maitreya, Manjughosha, Samantabhadra, Vajrapani, and Vishkambhin. These figures constitute the basic mandala of Amoghapasa as described in the known iconographic texts (see Pal 1966b, pp. 234–35). This mandala is even more elaborate as it includes many other deities. Sixteen more gods are seated on the square of the mandala, while beyond the outer circle at the four corners are twelve other deities. Among the faded seven figures along the top are the Five Tathagatas included in most Buddhist paintings.

Along the bottom the central figure of Achala Chandamaharoshana, an angry form of Vajrapani, is flanked by the seven jewels. In the left panel the donor and his relatives observe the *vajracharya* performing the fire ritual. Other members of the family appear in three rows in the right panel.

In its original state this must have been a handsome painting. The colors have now faded and peeled away, and the surface is considerably damaged. The iconography of the painting, however, is interesting. Not only is it the most elaborate mandala of Amoghapasa known, but it is also the earliest dated example of the deity's depiction.



Detail

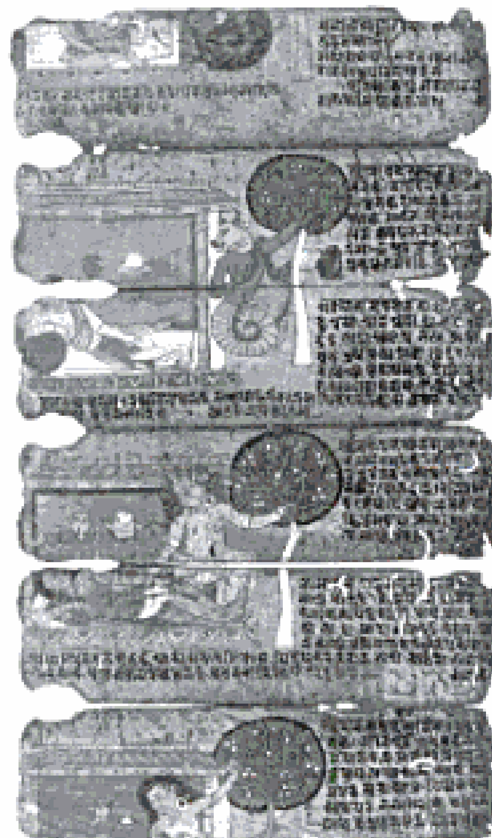
P19 *Chakrasamvara Mandala*
Dated 1590
On cotton; 46 x 34 5/8 in (116.8 x 88.0 cm)
Acquisitions Fund Purchase; M.73.2.1

According to the Newari inscription at the bottom, this painting was dedicated by the *vajracharya* Jitaraja in the Manasu monastery in 1590 (N.S. 510) in memory of his father, the *vajracharya* Uhlasa. A second date, 1589, included in the second line of the inscription, may refer to the year of Uhlasa's death. The monastery cannot be located.

In the center of the mandala, Chakrasamvara embraces his female partner Vajravarahi (see S65). In the second circle in the four cardinal directions are the goddesses Dakini, Khandaroha, Lama, and Rupini. In the four corners are four flowering vases symbolizing the mind of enlightenment, blood, the five ambrosias, and the five lamps. Like the goddesses, the vases are colored red, yellow, green, and blue. Each of the three following circles (3, 4, 5) contains eight pairs of embracing figures. The third circle, with blue figures, symbolizes the mind of the Buddha (*chittachakra*); the fourth, with red figures, symbolizes the word (*vakchakra*); the fifth, with white figures, symbolizes the body (*kayachakra*). At the four gateways of the mandala are the four guardian goddesses: Kakasya (raven headed), Sukarasya (sow headed), Svanasya (vulture headed), and Ulukasya (owl headed). Four more protective goddesses are placed at the four corners and, interestingly, each has two complexions. Yamadahi is blue and yellow, Yamadamshtri is red and green, Yamaduti is yellow and red, and Yamamathani is green and blue. Beyond this square palace is a circle with eight cremation grounds symbolizing the phenomenal world.

The mandala follows the descriptions contained in an important text, the *Nishpannayogavali* (Mallmann 1975, pp. 51–52). In addition, however, the painting includes a number of other Vajrayana deities outside the boundary of the mandala proper. Among them are Hevajra, Navatmaka, Heruka, Yogambara, Bhutadamara, Mahakala. Perhaps the most interesting is the large, multiarmed deity immediately above the mandala in the upper left corner. This is a special form of the god Hevajra in which he is shown as half blue and half green.

The most unusual feature of the painting occurs in the right-hand panel at the bottom where the idealized portraits of donors are included (see detail). The four figures seated in a row and seen in profile are obviously the *vajracharya* Jitaraja and his family. The figure seated before them and isolated by an arched frame no doubt represents the deceased Uhlasa. Very likely, this is a picture used during a consecration ceremony. No other dedicatory panel including a portrait of the deceased is known. Furthermore, the white-haired person is seated like a deity and holds two lotuses with his hands as do the sun- and moon-gods. The artist probably knew of the Tibetan portrait tradition in which monks are generally represented holding two lotuses in a similar fashion (Pal 1983, P13).



P20 *Six Folios from a Book of Charms*
Sixteenth century
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 2 1/2 x 8 1/2 in (6.4 x 21.6 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.11

Although damaged and incomplete, these six folios from a book of charms against spirits or *grahas* (seizers) contain illustrations rendered in a distinctive style prevalent in India during the period. Each illustration, covering portions of two adjoining pages, is a miniature composition comprising a pavilion with a seated or supine figure, one or two utensils, a tree, and a *graha*. The style is very similar to that seen in contemporary Indian paintings, such as the *Chaurapanchasika* or *Bhagavata* of 1540 (see Khandalavala and Chandra 1969), although the treatment here is more simplified. The only patch of strong color is used in the background; the colors red,

green, and blue are employed flatly. The figurative forms, as well as the apparel the afflicted men wear, are strictly local inventions.

The text is written on both sides of the folio in Sanskrit in Bhujimol script and a mixture of Sanskrit and Newari. Bhujimol script was widely used during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The illustrations are drawn only on one side of a sheet, and two compositions are complete. The colors purple, yellow, and orange, in addition to black and white, are used.

Only the lower half of the illustration on the uppermost folio remains. A man is shown seated on a white mat, near him is a *graha* whose lower body is serpentine. In the next composition, a man is reclining on a bolster as the evil spirit, identified in the accompanying text as a *gograha* (cow spirit), descends from his habitat, which is a tree. Appropriately his head is yellow and bovine shaped, his body and arms are green, and his coiled lower body is yellow and red. The spirit in the next composition is identified as a *yakshagraha*. He has entered the pavilion and is about to seize the sleeping man. His complexion is purple, and his hair is orange. In the fragmentary fourth illustration is a *rakshasagraha*, painted purple with black hair.

P21 *Folio with Five Buddhas from a Manuscript*



P21 Folio with Five Buddhas from a Manuscript
Sixteenth century
On paper; 3 3/8 x 15 1/2 in (8.6 x 39.4 cm)
Purchased from the Christian Humann Fund;
M.72.75.2

The five transcendental Buddhas represented on this isolated folio—probably the frontispiece—from an unknown Buddhist manuscript are (from left to right) Ratnasambhava, Vairochana, Akshobhya, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi. Except for their colors and gestures, the five Buddhas are identical. Each wears yellow and red robes and is seated in the yogic posture on a purple lotus. The aureoles are also identical, only their background color differs. Of yellow complexion, Ratnasambhava forms the gesture of charity with his right hand and holds the waterpot with his left hand. Vairochana is white and forms the turning of the wheel of the law gesture, which is shown in an unconventional fashion. The two middle fingers of the right hand touch the thumb, and the left hand is placed behind the right. The blue Akshobhya in the center holds his left hand in his lap and forms the earth-touching gesture with his right hand. Amitabha is painted red and holds the waterpot with both hands, which rest in his lap in the meditation gesture. The green Amoghasiddhi forms the gesture of reassurance with his right hand and holds the waterpot with his left hand.

Although the Buddhas sit in a uniform position, their representations have been enlivened by the flowing folds of the robes, varied colors of the aureoles, and rich scroll background painted green, black, and white. Some attempt at modeling is perceptible in the blue figure of Akshobhya and purple lotuses. To suggest volume, the artist has slightly varied the shades of the colors. The treatment of the folds of the robes and undergarment pleats is unusual for Nepali painting and may reflect Tibetan influence.



P22 Milarepa with Kagyupa Saints and Gods
Northwestern Nepal; late sixteenth century
On cotton; 16 3/4 x 12 1/2 in (42.5 x 31.7 cm)
Gift of Jack and Muriel Zimmerman; M.83.259

This painting, known in Tibetan as a *thanka*, is from the Dolpo region of northwestern Nepal, where Tibetan culture predominates. It was very likely painted for a monastery devoted to the Kagyupas, members of one of the principal religious orders of Tibet (see Pal 1983) and a strong presence in northwestern Nepal. Milarepa (1040–1123), the greatest poet-saint of Tibet, belonged to the Kagyupa order.

The figure of Milarepa, placed in the center, dominates the composition. Seated on a lotus and wearing the crossband of a yogi, Milarepa assumes his characteristic gesture by cupping his right ear with his hand, symbolizing his sensitivity as a singer. The halo behind his head is plain gray blue, the aureole is enriched with a scroll pattern in yellow and black. The dark figure at the top (slightly left of center) is the Vajrayana deity Vajrasattva. The only other divine figure is an angry form of Vajrapani, who straddles the border of the *thanka* beyond Milarepa's left knee and is represented against a red aureole. The other figures surrounding Milarepa include *mahasiddhas* and Kagyupa lamas. Below the lotus two monks perform ritual ceremonies as they are approached by a lion followed by two human or semidivine figures. The significance of this group is unknown. On the back of the painting is a cursorily drawn outline of a *chöten* (Tibetan stupa) with sketchy decorations along its base. The practice of drawing a *chöten* on the back of a painting is more common in Tibetan *thankas* than in Nepali *paubhas*.

The style of this *thanka* is typically Tibetan and differs considerably from contemporary Nepali paintings of the Kathmandu Valley. The differences are evident in the composition, coloring, and prominent use of the cloud motif and lotus design. The colors have unfortunately faded considerably, and the drawing is more carelessly executed than in other Nepali and Tibetan paintings of the period. Nevertheless, the figural forms indicate a late-sixteenth-century date.

P23 *Eight Heroines*

Color plate, p. 71



P23a



P23b

P23 Eight Heroines
Bhaktapur (?); c. 1650
On paper
Average folio: 7 1/16 x 5 5/8 in (17.9 x 14.2 cm)
Acquisitions Fund Purchase; M.73.2.3–10
Literature: Pal 1974, pp. 58–63; Pal 1978b, pp. 187–97.

a. Forlorn Heroine (Proshitapriyatamā)
b. Anxious Heroine (Utkaṇṭhitā)
c. Expectant Heroine (Vāsasajjā)
d. Deceived Heroine (Vipralabdhā)
e. Heroine Going to the Tryst (Abhisārikā)
f. Slighted Heroine (Khaṇḍitā)
g. Independent Heroine (Svādhinabharttṛikā)
h. Displeased Heroine (Kalahantaritā)

These eight paintings, representing the eight stereotyped heroines (*nayika*) of Sanskrit poetical literature, formed part of a *ragamala* series now in the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena. At the top of each painting is a Sanskrit verse describing eight different amorous situations in which a woman commonly finds herself. Rather than following the descriptions literally, the artist has attempted to express in visual terms the lyricism of the poems and drama of the situations.

These Nepali *nayika* pictures were modeled after Indian prototypes, but the Nepali artist was not simply an imitator. In introducing architectural elements and furnishings, he was loyal to local designs. The use of a multicolored lotus in the foreground and curtain along the top of each indoor scene is typically Nepali. Indeed, the artist was obviously familiar with religious pictures in which the deities are invariably placed on lotuses as are the figures in these *nayika* compositions. Although the figures are dressed in contemporary Mughal and Rajput styles, their somewhat awkward stances, especially when they are walking, and ritualized gestures made with long, gangling arms, are more characteristic of Nepali painting. An



P23c



P23d



P23e



P23f



P23g



P23h

unusual shade of red is the predominant color. Nepali artists usually prepared a more intense vermilion red, but in this series the artist has used a color closer to crimson or claret. Equally curious is the application of mica or silver flecks to give a glittering appearance to the surface. Moreover, a thin lacquer varnish has been applied to each picture.

Although the artist must have been familiar with Indian composition and iconography, the verses are ascribed to the famous Sanskrit poet Bharata (A.D. first century [?]), who is called *kavindra* (king of poets). Usually contemporary Indian hero/heroine pictures illustrate compositions by such poets as Kesavadasa (1555–1617). Moreover, the hero in these pictures is not identified with Krishna as was usual in seventeenth-century Indian paintings of the subject.

Despite the completeness of this series, it lacks a colophon. The series was without doubt painted around the mid-seventeenth century. The paleography is very similar to the writing style prevalent during the first half of the century. It has already been mentioned that these eight pictures belong to a series depicting musical modes. At least two seventeenth-century kings—Pratapamalla of Kathmandu (r. 1641–74) and Jagatprakasamalla of Bhaktapur (r. 1643–72)—were particularly fond of music, and both used the title *kavindra*. Pratapamalla's claim to the title king of poets may have been pretentious, but Jagatprakasamalla was indeed a poet, connoisseur of music, and authority on music theories (see Regmi 1966, 2: 220–24). Moreover, the style of these pictures differs from that encountered in dated paintings made for Pratapamalla (Pal 1978, fig. 220). These paintings of heroines and musical modes were, therefore, most likely commissioned by King Jagatprakasamalla of Bhaktapur.

P24 *Folio from an Album of Erotica*



P24 Folio from an Album of Erotica
Bhaktapur; c. 1675
On paper; 7 x 6 7/8 in (17.8 x 17.5 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Marilyn Grounds; M.81.272.3

This painting is from an album of erotica and shows a couple making love on a couch. Both are naked, but the man wears his turban. The viewer witnesses the scene through an arched opening. A lamp burns on the couple's left indicating that this is a night scene, the picture is otherwise uniformly lighted. A bolster is awkwardly placed at the back of the couch, and on the floor in the foreground are a spittoon and jug.

Most surviving albums of erotic pictures are from the seventeenth century or later and generally follow contemporary Indian modes. The figural forms and coloring represented here are, however, distinctly Nepali. The principal hues are white and green, with black, red, and yellow serving as accent colors. Although rendered in the same style as the *nayika* series (P23), this picture is technically less accomplished.

P25 *Three Mother Goddesses* *Color plate, p. 72*



Detail

P25 Three Mother Goddesses
Bhaktapur; dated 1679
On cotton; 23 1/2 x 19 3/4 in (59.6 x 50.0 cm)
Gift of Diandra and Michael Douglas; M.81.271.1

The long inscription (see Appendix) written on a narrow white band separating the enshrined deities from the consecration panel at the bottom states that the painting was dedicated in the year 1679 (N.S. 799) by Gangarama Bharo and members of his family on the successful completion of the Mahalakshmi rite. Family members participating in the celebration are identified in the inscription; many names are repeated again in the lower register of the painting.

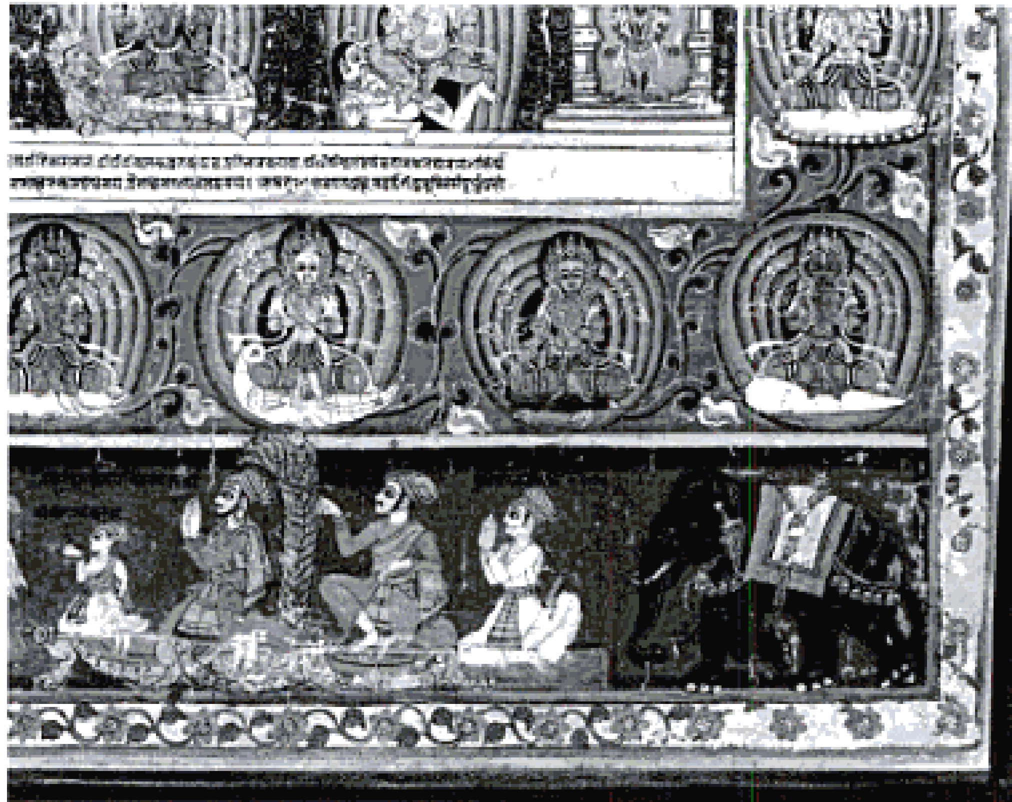
Mahalakshmi is the eighth Mother Goddess (see S45) and is portrayed here as the central figure seated on a lion in the shrine. She is flanked by

the goddess Chamunda on her right (see S32) and Kaumari on her left. Chamunda stands on a man, while Kaumari is seated on a peacock. Above them emerging from four cloud cartouches are (from left to right) Chandra, the moon-god; Ganesa; Kumara; and Surya, the sun-god. In the lower panel at left, two priests performing the ritual fire ceremony (*homa*); at right Gangarama and his family are seated reverentially. A border decorated with flowers and stylized clouds surrounds the painting.

The triple shrine of the Mother Goddesses with elaborate columns and arches topped by grinning faces of glory is placed against a faintly rendered background of green hills outlined in black. The wide sky is filled with swirls of multihued clouds, which, together with the floriate designs of the arches and scrollwork behind the deities, enliven the composition. The manner of representing the sky with floating conceptualized clouds appeared in Nepali religious paintings from about the seventeenth century, due largely to Tibetan influence. The details of this rich and colorful painting are rendered with care and finesse.

P26 *Vishnu Mandala*

Color plate, p. 73



Detail

P26 Vishnu Mandala
Bhaktapur; dated 1681
On cotton; 65 5/16 x 50 5/8 in (166.0 x 128.4 cm)
Acquisitions Fund Purchase; M.73.2.2
Literature: Pal 1968, fig. 116; Pal 1975, pp. 110–11, 132; Slusser 1982, figs. 383–84.

According to the inscription on a narrow band above the second register from the bottom (see detail), this painting was commissioned by King Jitamitramalla of Bhaktapur (r. 1673–96) and his brother Ugramalla. Although Ugramalla is mentioned before Jitamitramalla in the inscription and is given more laudatory epithets, in the panel containing the portraits in the bottom register, Jitamitramalla precedes Ugramalla and is further distinguished by the snake canopy behind him. Behind Ugramalla is seated Bhagirama Pradhananga, the most influential minister in the kingdom, and in front of the monarch is his son and successor, Bhupatindramalla (r. 1696–1722). The priest offering oblation in the fire is Chandrasekhara Upadhyaya, the royal guru. The painting was dedicated on the completion of the Anantavrata rite in honor of Vishnu, in the year 1681 (see Appendix). In the inscription Vishnu is addressed as Anantanarayana. Narayana is a synonym of Vishnu, Ananta is the serpent symbolizing eternity.

The center of the mandala is occupied by an elaborate temple in the style typical of Malla Nepal. The three-storied temple, containing the images of Vishnu, Lakshmi, and Garuda, is floating in the ocean inhabited by the eight *nasus*, who represent the treasures of the ocean, and two forms of Vishnu. The more important subsidiary figures are the eight guardians, twelve signs of the zodiac, nine planets, fourteen other Vishnus (each in a shrine), twenty-eight *nakshatras* (in the two outermost side columns and second register from the bottom), ten avatars (top register), and Siva, Brahma, Kumara, Sarasvati, Ganesa, and others.

Considering that the mandala was painted for the Bhaktapur royal family, it may be inferred that it was executed locally. The style, however, cannot be associated specifically with that city. In fact, it differs considerably from the style of the murals in the Bhaktapur palace rendered under the auspices of King Jitamitramalla. Since this is a royal commission, one must also assume that the kingdom's best artist was responsible for it. While he has used a rich palette with a full range of colors, the tonality is not as smooth and vivacious as in earlier paintings. Although the artist was clearly familiar with the contemporary Mughal style—evident from attempts to indicate the sky, winged flying angels above the shrine, and attire of the figures in the consecration scene below—he was not interested in achieving the more naturalistic representations for which Mughal painting is known. The portraits are so generalized that without identifying labels the personalities would be scarcely distinguishable.



P27 *Book of Planets and Astrology*
Seventeenth century
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 7/8 x 7 5/8 in (9.9 x 19.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.23

As there is no colophon, it is difficult to determine the exact title of the text, which seems concerned with the planets and astrology. Altogether there are eight folios in the manuscript. Eight illustrations of the planetary deities appear only on four folios. Each is placed on the left of the page. The iconography of the figures does not conform with the nine well-known personifications of the planets, and some are more easily recognized than others. The eight include two representations of Rahu (eclipse). Ketu (comet) is easily discernible as are the moon-god and Saturn. The remaining figures cannot be identified with any certainty. Some with animal heads may represent *grahas*.

In the painting illustrated here the black figure of Rahu emerges from flames placed on the back of an animal, perhaps a dog. The hair of Rahu and the flames are orange. Rahu holds in his hands the red disc of the sun and the white disc of the moon.



P28 *Book of Omens*
Seventeenth century
Ink and color on paper
Each folio: 2 3/8 x 4 7/8 in (6.0 x 12.4 cm)
Gift of Dr and Mrs. Robert S. Coles;
M.82.169.27.1–83

The book consists of eighty-three folios with Sanskrit text and illustrations on one side and Newari translation on the reverse. The verse on each page describes the consequences of sighting the object illustrated. For instance, in the folios illustrated here the thunderbolt and flywhisk are considered auspicious, the saffron-clad Buddhist monk and ogre are regarded as inauspicious. It is not clear, however, whether the objects and creatures refer to omens seen in dreams or encountered while awake. The omens include a wide variety of inanimate objects and symbols as well as animals, human beings, and supernatural phenomena.

The representations are lively and carefully rendered. The paleography and style of the illustrations suggest a seventeenth-century date.



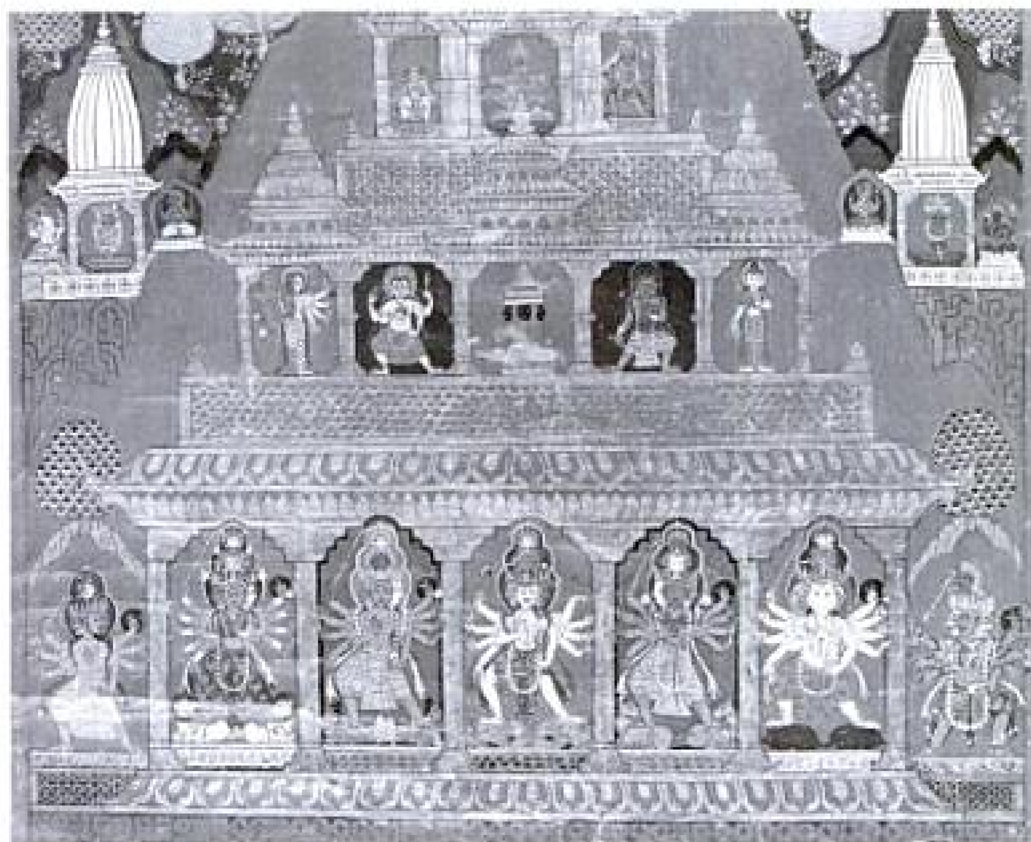
P29 Book of Poems and Images
Dated 1711
Ink and color on paper; 3 3/8 x 8 5/8 in
(8.6 x 21.9 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.24

Except for the date, most of the colophon is obliterated. The year given is N.S. 831, corresponding to 1711. The scribe claims that he has written whatever he has seen and should not be held accountable for errors.

Most of the text, preceded by the name of a raga and consisting of devotional poems dedicated to Vishnu, was meant to be sung. Included are poems by the well-known Indian poets—Govindadas, Kabir, Surdas, and Vidyapati—and the poet-kings of Bhaktapur—Jagajjyotirmalla, Jagatprakasamalla, and Bhupatindramalla, who reigned when the manuscript was written.

Illustrations seem unrelated to the poems. Except for an image of Ganesa and a Sivalinga, all representations are of goddesses, including the Eight Mother Goddesses. All are seated on various mounts, except for one image of Uma (illustrated here). The goddess is seen walking between two trees in a hilly landscape. She carries in her four arms the kettledrum, rosary, trident, and waterpot.

P30 *Saiva Shrines in a Landscape* *Color plate, p. 74*



Detail

P30 Saiva Shrines in a Landscape
1700–1725
Opaque watercolor and silver on cotton
42 1/2 x 33 in (106.7 x 83.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Sherwood and Christian Humann; M.76.20
Literature: Pal 1978, p. 92, fig. 121.

This illustration is one of the finest surviving examples of Hindu religious painting from Nepal. Various Saiva shrines are represented against a richly detailed conceptualized landscape. The composition is strongly architectonic and symmetrical, but the gentle undulation of the hills, soft, pom-pomlike trees, and animated postures of the multiarmed deities impart a lively elegance to the painting. Although red predominates, the unknown artist has varied his palette considerably. The principal shrine is unusually painted in silver. White, green, mauve, pink, and gray have been used with pleasing effect to create a delightfully variegated composition. The stylized mountains, hills, and rocky escarpments assume a remarkable variety of forms, while the trees of uniform size and shape are differentiated by color and decorative pattern.

Rising in three tiers, the central shrine is a copy of a temple design popular in the Kathmandu Valley during the seventeenth century. The forms of the elaborate temple and subsidiary shrines can be seen in both brick and stone in many religious structures all over the valley.

The first floor of the main temple (see detail) is protected at each end by two divine guardians. The five deities within the arches are (left to right) the Great Goddess, Vishnu, Siva, Surya, and Ganesa. All have multiple heads and arms and two mounts each. On the floor above, the central shrine is occupied by a four-faced Sivalinga, each face painted black. The Sivalinga is flanked by two guardians, who are probably forms of Bhairava, and by an Ardhanarisvara (see S15) on the extreme left and a goddess on the right. The upper floor has a Sivalinga with two receding water containers in the middle and a meditating yogi and a *bhairava* on either side. Six more lingas are enshrined in little pillared pavilionlike structures in the mountainous landscape around the central temple. Four shrines are flanked by a pair of deities, while two more gods sit on either side of a tree at the summit of the red mountain at the top of the painting.



P31 Illustration from a Devimahatmya *Album*
Early eighteenth century
On paper; 4 1/2 x 8 in (11.4 x 20.3 cm)
Gift of Paul F. Walter; M.70.70
Literature: Pal 1978, fig. 152.

The *Devimahatmya* is the most important religious text of the Saktas, who believe in the supreme power and authority of the Great Goddess. The text eulogizes her victory over several demons and describes her various qualities and powers by addressing her as the supreme being. In this example from an early-eighteenth-century album, which is now dispersed, the illustrations appear prominently on the obverse of each folio and the text is relegated to the reverse.

In this illustration the goddess, identified as Ambika, leads the Eight Mother Goddesses in combat against Raktabija, who had the ability to convert every drop of his own blood into another demon. Ambika ordered Kali to drink up the blood drops before they fell to the ground. The unknown artist shows an emaciated Kali lapping up all the demons with her outstretched tongue.

As is typical in Nepali narrative paintings, the composition is divided into two registers by mountain ranges. Curiously, the snowy peaks of the mountains are placed along the foreground of the picture rather than the distant background. The spatial dimension is thus completely distorted. The peaks are colored white and outlined in red and blue, while the figures are set off like marionettes against an olive green ground. Despite the naïve representation and stylized postures and gestures, these pictures are quite lively and humorous.

P32 *Goddess Kali and Bhairava in Union*

P32 Goddess Kali and Bhairava in Union
Eighteenth century
On paper; 12 x 7 1/2 in (30.5 x 19.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.7

A dark goddess with four arms is engaged in copulation with a blue god, also with four arms. Both stand militantly on a burning corpse, against an aureole decorated with flowers and fringed with leaping tongues of flame. The landscape setting is composed of a green ground with tufts of grass and snowy peaks.

Except for their bone ornaments and garlands of severed heads, both are naked. The right hands of the goddess display the gestures of reassurance and charity; the upper left hand brandishes the sword and the lower left hand holds the severed head. These attributes and her appearance indicate that the goddess represents Kali in the form in which she is particularly venerated in Bengal. Noteworthy are Kali's clawlike, long nails. Bhairava holds the trident with two hands above her head, while the other two carry the sword and skull-cup. Unlike most Buddhist representations (P13) in which the male is given the dominant role, here the goddess assumes greater importance. Although the bottom edge has been slightly damaged, the bright and vivid colors are otherwise well preserved.





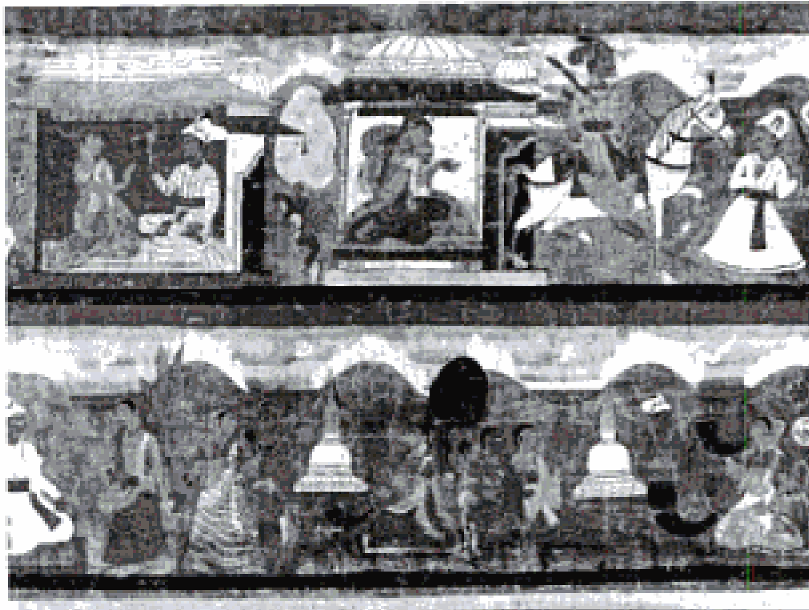
P33 The Goddess Ugratara
Eighteenth century
On paper; 12 x 7 1/2 in (30.5 x 19.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.81.206.8

This picture forms a pair with P32, and both are parts of a larger group representing various manifestations of the Hindu Great Goddess. She wears a tiger skin, bone ornaments, snake, and garland of severed heads. Except for the absence of her consort Bhairava and her attributes, the image is similar to other representations of the goddess. She brandishes the sword with her upper right hand and holds the chopper with her lower right hand. Her upper left hand holds the blue lotus and her lower left hand holds the skull-cup. She can, thus, be identified as Ugratara, one of the Ten Mahavidyas, whose cult was particularly popular in Nepal and India after the fifteenth century. Kali in the other picture is also represented as one of the Mahavidyas.

The word *vidya* generally means "knowledge," and the prefix *maha* means "great"; hence, the Mahavidyas are primarily regarded as the Goddesses of Great or Transcendental Knowledge. In a narrower sense and in tantric parlance *vidya* signifies a magical and mystical charm similar to the Buddhist dharani. Thus, the Ten Mahavidyas are really Hindu counterparts of the five Buddhist protective deities known as the Pancharaksha (see P6). Their number may symbolize the ten directions or may have been influenced by the concept of the Ten Avatars of Vishnu. Ugratara, the goddess represented here, was very likely borrowed from the Buddhist pantheon.

The differences between this and the picture of Kali are chiefly iconographic. Minor differences, however, are also perceptible in the decorative design. The aureole immediately behind the goddess is filled with varied floral forms. The cloud pattern is slightly variegated with two bands projecting in both directions and touching the snowy peaks. Two graceful white cranes enliven the sky.

P34 The Story of the Golden Horn *Color plate, p. 76*



P34a detail



P34b detail

P34 The Story of the Golden Horn
Eighteenth century
On cotton; 25 1/2 x 366 in (64.8 x 930.2 cm)
County Purchase and Gift of Mrs. Joan Palevsky; M.74.1
Literature: Pal 1978, pp. 108–9, figs. 154–55.

This long narrative scroll is the only one of its kind in the collection. Such scrolls are extremely popular among Buddhists, who on special occasions bring them out of monastery storages and hang them up along the walls. The stories are then read before a congregation, whose members can follow the narrative illustrated in the scroll. This particular example recounts the poignant story of the Sringabheri (golden horn) *avandana* and the performance of the Lakshachaitya rite, which requires the dedication of one hundred thousand chaityas or stupas (see P8). The origin of the rite is described as follows:

In the town of Śaśiprabha there reigned a king named Sinhaketu. His wife, Sulakshaṇā, was greatly devoted to him, and frequently begged and prayed that he should abstain from hunting. The king did not listen to her advice, and on his death, was born a buffalo. His wife was born in a Brahman family, and, through her previous virtuous deeds, remembered the history of her former life. Knowing the buffalo to be her husband, she followed him everywhere. Once she prayed to the Lord to retrieve her husband from his brutal condition, and the Lord advised her what to do. One day the buffalo was destroyed and eaten up by some wild beasts, and a few bones and the horns were all that were left behind. The faithful wife cast the bones into the river, brought water in the horns to wash the spot where the buffalo had fallen, and, washing the spot, buried whatever fragments she found and the horns, and erected a chaitya over them with river sand. For thirty days successively she worshiped the chaitya with the utmost reverence and devotion. On the twenty-first day a crystal chaitya came down from heaven, and entered the sandy one. The place became surrounded by a moat and seven successive lines of ramparts. The horns were changed into gold. Within this

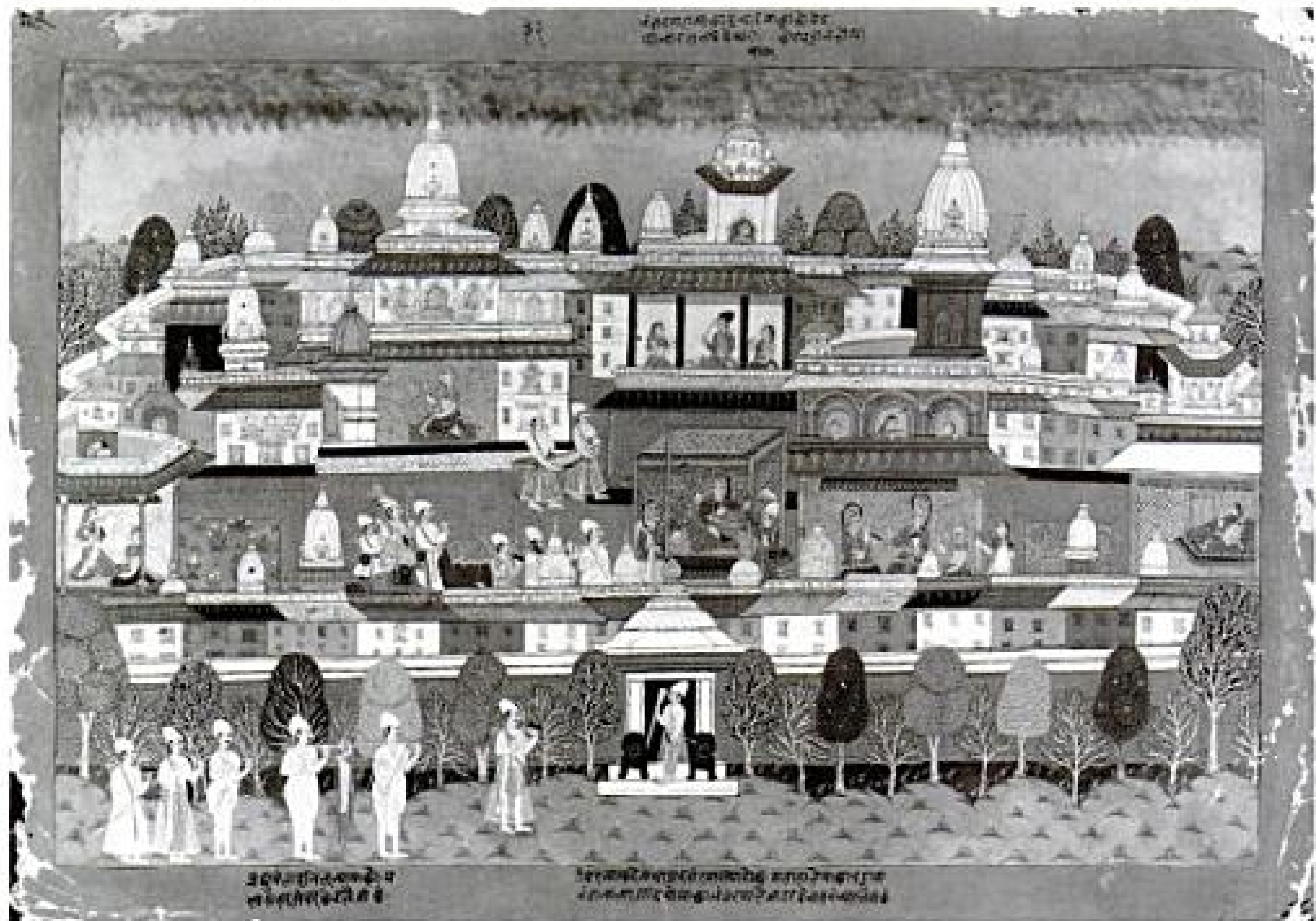
crystal chaitya a chamber became manifest, and from the golden horns within it came out a handsome young man, Dharmaśila, who took the woman by the hand, and claimed her as his wife. He was subsequently elected by the people king of the country, when he assumed the name Bhadraśṛiṅgi, and his devoted wife was known by the name of Rupavati (Mitra 1971, pp. 225–26).

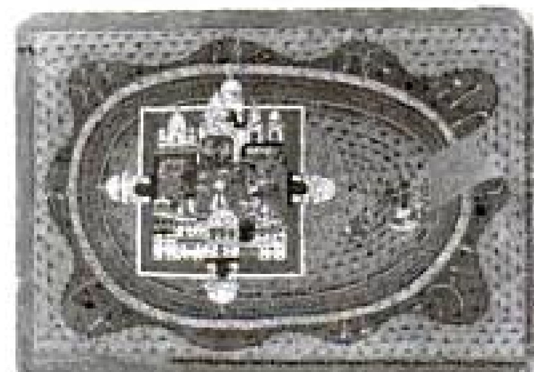
The sections illustrated here depict some of the most poignant moments of the story. The story is represented in two registers beginning on the left. In the upper register of illustration *a*, Sulakshana—seated in a pavilion with her husband—is trying to dissuade him from hunting. Next, a dejected Sulakshana sits alone in the pavilion as the king sets out on a horse for the hunt. In the following illustration (*b*), the hunt is on. In the lower register the unhappy Sulakshana, in her next birth, sits pensively in a house as a lion attacks and kills the buffalo who is the reincarnation of her princely husband. In the lower register of *a*, the final scenes of the story are represented. Sulakshana first presents the horn to the chaitya and then worships it, and then the handsome Bhadrasringi appears from the golden horn.

As is usual in such narrative scrolls, the entire story is unfolded continuously against an undulating mountain range interspersed at regular intervals with snowy peaks. The blue sky is filled with rows of fluffy clouds and flying storks. Trees and flowering plants are added to the flat ground painted in gray and pale olive green. Like the decorative landscape, the animals are rendered conceptually and were not drawn from life. Most figures perform their various tasks with contrived and theatrical postures and ritualized gestures. Although very little emotion is registered in any of the faces, the narration is not wanting in expressive qualities. Even within his limited means, the unknown artist has depicted the heroine's melancholy with telling simplicity. The generally subdued color tonality, with chalky white, crimson red, and gray predominating, is another unusual element. These muted colors, purposefully selected by the artist, enhance the poignant mood of the story.

P35 *Illustrations from a* Bhagavatapurana *Manuscript* *Color plate, p. 77*

P35a





P35b

P35 *Illustrations from a* Bhagavatapurana *Manuscript*
1750–1800
On paper
a. The Presentation of the Fish to Sambara
13 7/8 x 20 3/8 in (35.2 x 51.7 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener; M.71.112.2
Literature: Pal 1978, fig. 168.

b. Scenes from the Story of Narakasura
15 x 22 in. (38.1 x 55.8 cm)
Gift of the Michael J. Connell Foundation; M.72.3.1
Literature: Pal 1975, pp. 114–15, 133.

These two examples are from a large series containing more than one hundred pictures illustrating book 10 of the *Bhagavatapurana*. Each picture is enclosed by a red margin, in which is written a brief text identifying the subject depicted. Most pictures in the series are dominated by architectural compositions as in illustration *a*. As I have previously written: "Indeed, the artist's obsession with architecture gives these paintings their distinctive character. In addition to juxtaposing many different forms of structures, he provides us with several views of palaces and buildings within a single visual field" (1975, p. 133). A comparison with the contemporary Sringabheri scroll (P34) illustrates the stylistic differences between the style of these pictures and the more familiar mode of representing narrative themes. It has sometimes been suggested that the style of this *Bhagavata* is related to central Indian paintings. The paintings are, however, much closer to the well-known Guler (a school of painting in Himachal Pradesh) *Siege of Lanka* series in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Archer 1973, 2: 98–99). Not only are the pictures unusually large, but a bird's-eye view of the architectural setting is also emphasized. Apart from this similarity, the Nepali pictures are treated much more flatly and decoratively than are the Guler paintings.

Illustration *a* depicts an episode from the story of Pradyumna, who was Kama, the god of love, born as the son of Krishna and Rukmini. When he was ten days old, he was thrown into the sea by the demon Sambara, who knew that Pradyumna had been born to destroy him. A large fish swallowed the infant, and in due course the fish was caught by fishermen who took it to Sambara as a present. In this illustration the two fishermen carry the fish first to the palace gate and then to the prince seated in his pavilion on a terrace. The fish is then transported to the kitchen where a cook seated in the company of two women is about to cut the fish with his knife. Pradyumna appears from the fish's stomach, and after being brought up by Sambara's wife, kills the king.

Illustration *b* depicts an unusual composition. The curiously flattened palace on the left belongs to Narakasura, demon king of Pragjyotisha, whom Krishna has just destroyed. Riding Garuda, Krishna and his second wife enter the palace and recover the various divine emblems, such as Varuna's parasol and Aditi's earrings, purloined by Narakasura. Krishna is seen on the right returning the garland and parasol to Aditi. The path cleared behind the divine mount conveys the immediacy of Krishna's landing.

P36 *Folio from a* Pancharaksha *Manuscript*



P36 *Folio from a* Pancharaksha *Manuscript*
C. 1800
Ink and color on paper
Folio: 3 1/4 x 12 in (8.2 x 30.5 cm)
Illustration: 3 1/4 x 2 5/16 in (8.2 x 7.5 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Zimmerman; M.82.2.1

The text is written in black in six lines on both sides of the folio. A single illustration appears on the obverse. The figure represented is Mahasahasrapramardini, who is invoked at the beginning of the first line. Mahasahasrapramardini (great destroyer of one thousand foes) is one of the five goddesses known collectively as Pancharaksha or the Five Protectresses.

The goddess crushes two yellow, naked male figures who are crouching on a lotus. Her body is painted black, and she has four heads and eight arms. Her principal head is black; the other three are white, red, and yellow. Her right hands hold against her chest the double-thunderbolt, sword, arrow, and an elephant goad. The principal left hand holds the noose; the other three hands carry the blue lotus, bow, and battleax. An obese figure, she wears the tiger skin and various ornaments. She is represented against a red aureole supported by two black elephants. The aureole — circumscribed by narrow borders of red, yellow, blue, white, and black — is set off by a black ground, while the black elephants are depicted against green. Black is an unusual background color for Nepali paintings.



P37 Ashtamatrikapuja *Manuscript*
C. 1800
Ink and color on paper
Average folio: 3 1/16 x 7 1/16 in (7.8 x 18 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.17

This is a complete, although partially damaged, manuscript of twenty-six folios of a text known as the *Ashtamatrikapuja*. The text describes the rituals involved in the worship of the Eight Mother Goddesses. Although the manuscript has a colophon, the section containing the date is missing. The scribe's name is given as Devananda Bharo. The writing and drawing style indicate a circa 1800 date.

In addition to the Eight Mother Goddesses, various other representations include Ganesa riding on a rat and lion; a tableau of the Great Goddess seated on Siva and accompanied by four Bhairavas and four female companions; Kumara on the peacock; two other goddesses; and idealized portraits of the donor and his wife. Each goddess is represented with her Bhairava, who rides a different mount. For instance, in the picture illustrated here, the goddess is obviously Indrani because her mount is the elephant, but the animal depicted with her Bhairava looks like a ram. Moreover, while Bhairava is awesome and has eight arms, the goddess is a comely female with two hands, one of which forms the gesture of charity and the other holds the skull-cup.



P38 *Book of Omens*
C. 1800
Ink and color on paper; 2 3/8 x 8 in (6 x 20.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles; M.82.169.16.1–72

The book consists of seventy-two loose folios with the text and illustrations appearing on one side only. A verse written in Sanskrit appears on the left of the page, and an illustration is drawn on the right. Omens are represented by animals; birds; insects; natural objects such as trees and hills; and various human beings such as a prince, mendicant, and woman. Inauspicious symbols include the owl, rooster, donkey, deer, naked Jain mendicant, alligator, snake, and Saiva Kapalika. Auspicious symbols include the crown, lotus, wife, daughter, gander, swastika, full waterpot, banner, thunderbolt, Buddhist bhikshu, throne, and tortoise.



P39 *King Girvan Yuddhavikram Shah (1797–1816)*
C. 1815
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper
8 1/4 x 6 1/2 in (21.0 x 16.5 cm)
Indian Art Discretionary Fund; M.76.129

Girvan Yuddhavikram Shah ascended the throne in 1799 when he was only two years old and died in 1816 of smallpox at the age of nineteen. The traditional history of the country describes the young ruler: "This Rajah was religious, mild, affable and paid much attention to the *Sastras* [religious texts] and the Brahmans. He consecrated the entire revenue of Devapatan to Pasupatinath on the day of Sivaratri [Night of Siva]. When he had attained the knowledge of the *Sastras*, he became too mild and merciful as to leave off shooting and also prohibited the people the use of *gulels* or crossbows" (Hasrat 1970, p. 97). His principal political act was to appoint as prime minister Bhimsen Thapa, who ruled Nepal with an iron hand from 1806 until 1837.

In this realistic representation, painted a year or two before his death, the young king is portrayed as affable and mild mannered. Such realistic portraits of royalty became fashionable in Nepal during the seventeenth-century due to Mughal and Rajput influence. Ultimately, however, such formal portraiture with oval frames derives from the European tradition. The golden sunburst decorated with blue flowers is, nevertheless, directly borrowed from Persian book illuminations. Above the king's head is a crown with two birds of paradise.

Wearing a gold embroidered dress and plumed yellow hat adorned with a diadem of pearls and sapphires, the king is set off against a gray background. His posture and the placement of the red and gold bolster at an angle in the foreground are unusual for such formal portraits. No doubt the artist was strongly influenced by European portraiture, and he may have been an Indian, for the technique employed in the painting of this portrait is very typically Indian.

Appendix

Selected Inscriptions

The Appendix is limited to an analysis of inscriptions that are legible and substantially informative. Short inscriptions with a date only are discussed in the individual entries. Almost all inscriptions are dedications.

Inscriptions on bronze sculptures occur generally along the base and occasionally on the back or around the aureole. Dedicatory inscriptions on cloth paintings appear commonly at the bottom of the work. Inscriptions in manuscripts occur usually on the last page, which generally includes the colophon. Inscriptions in model-books are not consistently located.

Translations are given for only the more important inscriptions. Generally, an inscription contains the date of the dedication and names of the donor and his family. In such instances, a summary in English rather than a full translation is given. Letters or words in brackets indicate reconstructions; a bracketed x signifies an illegible letter. Commentary is included only to elucidate a particular element of an inscription. Some words and expressions are problematic; a thorough linguistic discussion must be postponed until further research can be undertaken.

The more important inscriptions have been read and translated by Ian Alsop, an American scholar resident in Kathmandu, with the assistance of two noted Nepali epigraphists, Dhanavajra Vajracharya and Hemraj Shakya. Each read the inscriptions from photographs, which may have resulted in some minor inaccuracies.

With one or two exceptions, most inscriptions are written in a combination of Sanskrit and Newari, the common practice in Nepal, especially from the fifteenth century when Newari began to be recognized as a national language. Before the fifteenth century, inscriptions were composed in Sanskrit. Most inscriptions contain grammatical and orthographical errors due to the ignorance or carelessness of the scribe. Presumably, the text of inscriptions written on sculptures and paintings was composed by a brahmin or *vajrāchārya* and copied by the artist himself. The scripts used in the various inscriptions are Bhujimol, Devanāgarī, Kuṭila, and Newari. All four are derived from the more ancient Brāhmī and are distinguished by subtle paleographical differences. Kuṭila script prevailed generally between the seventh and twelfth centuries. Newari script is said to have originated in the ninth century and continues to be used today. Most early manuscripts as well as the inscriptions on two bronzes (S13 and S17) are written in Newari script. Bhujimol script appears to have been invented in the eleventh century and went out of fashion in the seventeenth century. Most sketchbooks in the collection from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are written either in Newari or Bhujimol script. Devanāgarī script is employed in a few documents after the seventeenth century. Inscriptions on bronzes and *paubhās* are written primarily in Newari script.

Most inscriptions follow an established formula, recording the precise date, occasion for the dedication, name of the reigning monarch, and names of the donor and members of his family. The artist's name is seldom included, and occasionally the donor's caste or profession is mentioned. A few inscriptions contain historical and cultural information. The inclusion of the ruler's name verifies the date of execution and also indicates where the painting may have been made. Thus, if an inscription contains the name of a Kathmandu king, it can be assumed that the work was rendered in the capital city. This does not negate the possibility that the artist could have been a resident of some other town or village in the valley.

The most important and informative dedicatory inscriptions occur in D2, D9, P15, and P26. D2 is an artist's sketchbook containing much historical information concerning King Yakshamalla and the birth of a royal prince. D9 is an enormously significant document for Nepali and Tibetan art history because the model-book was prepared by a Newari *vajrāchārya* in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. The severely damaged inscription in P15 is by far the most fascinating because it provides much information about the last great Indian Buddhist pundit, Vanaratna, who was revered in Nepal and Tibet. His close association with Nepal was known hitherto only from Tibetan sources and this painting, fragmentary as it is with its effaced inscription, is the oldest extant Nepali document concerning this important Buddhist teacher. Finally, P26 is the only object in the collection that is a royal dedication and was painted in Bhaktapur for the reigning monarchs of that kingdom in the year 1681. It also includes two interesting eulogies composed in Sanskrit and dedicated to Vishṇu.

S13 *The God Vishṇu*

M.80.18.7

Inscription

Oṁ trayasamādhike vatsarake śate tapasaḥ dvādaśi śukla tithau vidhau pravara vaidyakulakama [xxx]bhuvaṇa jīva iti jena khyātaya. . . .

Translation

In the year 103 [A.D. 983], on Monday, the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Māgha [January–February], Bhuvaṇa Jīva of the most excellent Vaidya family, for his [own] glory [or, for whose glory]. . . .

Commentary

The legible portion of the inscription is etched around the image of Vishṇu; the last section of the inscription, contained in the base, is illegible.

The reading and translation are by Ian Alsop and his colleagues.

S65 *Chakrasaṁvara and Vajravārāhī in Union*

M.80.110

Inscription

Oṁ nama śrī chakrasaṁvarāyaṃ sarvvahlasana saṁdehaṁ jagadatupramodakaṁ | chitramuninibalabhūtaṁ śrī saṁvalanaṁstūteṁ || saṁvat 892 phāguṇa śukla saptami kuhnuṁ śrī śrī chakrasaṁvaraṇamatra nāma vaina vajavārāhī pratimā dayakājulo || prathama putra śrī bhāskalaja dhavlaja śivlaja | vidhivlaja || gārachchi chaitya hlaṁ ra kākāsyā urukāsyā thūtipakna sārathīna dayakāḍo praḍhikhācho hva dīna jule śubhamastu ||

Summary

The first two lines contain a eulogy in honor of Chakrasaṁvara. It is then stated that the image was dedicated on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Phālguṇa (February–March) in the year 892 (1772).

Commentary

The eulogy at the beginning is written in faulty Sanskrit, the rest of the text is composed in Newari and contains many orthographic errors. Although the donor is not identified, several names are given; the first name, Bhāskalaja, is characterized as firstborn. Possibly the image was intended as a memorial for a number of deceased sons. The goddesses Kākāsyā (raven faced) and Ulukāsyā (owl faced) are mentioned in the last line.

S68 *The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara with Two Attendants*

M.81.205.1

Inscription

namaḥ śrīmadāryāvalokiteśvarāya || śubhasaṁvat 937 vaiśākha śudhi 5 sahatatuchchheya turādharasiṁha bhāryyā halalakshmī i[x]sayāta bhimarathajātrāyāhā lokeśvara ushṇīshavijayā dayakā divaṁgata jarāśaṁkha muni bhātṛiputra dhanavirasiṁha tejaḍākasiṁha pautra dayāḍākasiṁha thvapa[x]sathā nāmana śrīsaptavochani tārā sūryadhanakubera hayagrīva thvadevatā pratimā dayakā sija dhanasiṁhapu[x] siṁha[x]ra-ḍākasiṁha jayaraksħmī [mayaja-mativa (?)] bhitiyarivāra chchhinaṁ pratimādayakāṁ pratishṭhāyāhājulo śubhaṁ magara bhavatu sarvadākāra śubha ||

Summary

This image of Lokeśvara and Ushṇīshavijayā was dedicated in the year 937 (A.D. 1817), on the fifth day of the month of Vaiśākha (April–May) to commemorate the Bhīmaratha ceremony in honor of Tulādharasiṁha and his wife, Halalakshmī, and in memory of their deceased nephews Dhanavirasiṁha and Tejaḍā-kasiṁha and their grandson Dayāḍākasiṁha. The two attendant deities are identified as Sūryadhanakubera and Hayagrīva. The donors' names are illegible.

D2 *Book with Text and Sketches*

M.82.169.1

Inscription

[1] Saṁvat 570 bhādra pada śuddhi 2 sa rāmāyaṇa yyā shaya tālapati hato dina juroḥ || [2] Saṁvat 570 bhādra pada śuddhi sa thva saṁphuli sa naka[sa (?) xx] dāna juroḥ || [3] Saṁvat 572 māgha śuddhi 1 thva saṁphudisa ākhara hlāya śubhaḥ ||

Translation

[1] In the year 570 [A.D. 1450], on the second day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra [August–September], the *tālapati* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* dance-drama was brought [in]. [2] In the year 570 [A.D. 1450], on the thirteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra, the designs [or drawings] were copied into this book. [3] In the year 572 [A.D. 1452], on the first day of the bright fortnight of the month of Māgha [January–February], the letters [or words] were copied into this book.

Commentary

The crucial word in line [1] is *tālapati*. If the word is a misspelling of *tālapatra* meaning "palm leaf," then the sketches of the *Rāmāyaṇa* scenes drawn on palm leaves were perhaps brought into the palace or made available to the artist. It is also possible that they were transported from Mithila. In any event, eleven days after their arrival, the Newari artist copied these drawings in this book. The word translated here as drawing or design is *naka[sā]*, which is perhaps a Newari adaptation of the Arabic *naqsa* meaning "design." The text may have been written almost two years after the illustrations were made. It is thus possible that in other such drawings and sketchbooks the text and illustrations were not made at the same time.

Other historical information was added in a slightly different hand in the year 1455, the last date recorded in the book. In 1452 the Tūlāpurushadāna was performed for Rāyamalla, one of Yaksha-malla's sons. References are also made to certain villages being seized in 1454 and a fire in a particular locality in 1450. The short text comprises a building manual (*vāstuśāstra*).

The reading and translation are by Ian Alsop and his colleagues.

D9 *Book of Buddhist Litanies and Images*

M.81.56

Inscription

Saṁvat 773 pausha vaddhi 5 ādityavāra thva kunhu lhāsa deśasa choya sampurṇṇa juva dīna | likhita vajrāchāryya śrī mantadeva || śubhamastu ||

Translation
In the year 773, on Sunday, the fifth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Pausha, in Lhasa, the writing was completed by the *vajrāchārya* Śrīmantadeva.

Commentary
The month of Pausha corresponds roughly to mid-December–mid-January. Thus, depending on when the bright half of the moon occurred during the month, the date is either December 1652 or January 1653.

D10 *Book of Drawings*

M.82.169.5

Inscription
Samvat 794 baiśākhaśukla ekādaśī buddha vāra kuhnu choya dhuna kadina juro || chaita śuklayakādaśisvamavara thvakuhnu śrī 2 jayapratāpamalla juju abhākajuva dina julo || 794 || chaitrakāla endrarājayāṁkijo | chaitrakāra jugidevana svayā juro ||

Summary
In the year 794 [A.D. 1674], on Wednesday, the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha [April–May], this book was completed. On the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra [March–April], Pratāpamalla died. Artists Endra[Indra]raja and Jugi[Jogi]deva.

Commentary
Since Pratāpamalla (r. 1641–74) ruled the Kathmandu kingdom, it may be presumed that the sketchbook was prepared there.

P5 *Five Folios from a* Paramārtha Nāmasaṅgīti *Manuscript*

M.83.7.3

Inscription
deya dharmāya pravaramahāyānayāyinaḥ paramapāsakam śrī kīrtipālasārthavāhasya yadatrapuṇyantad bhavatvāchāryapādhyāyamātāpitṛipūrvaṅgamakṛitvāsakalasattvarāsaranuttarajñānaphalavāpnyati ||

Summary
This is the pious gift of the merchant Kīrtipāla, the great devotee and follower of Mahāyāna. Whatever merit there is in this gift may it accrue to his parents, teachers, ancestors, and all sentient beings.

Commentary
The inscription forms the post colophon statement on the last page of the manuscript and is not dated.

P11 *Vishṇu Maṇḍala*

M.77.19.5

Inscription
[1] om śreyo'stuḥ samvat 540 bhādra śukla chaturddaśyāntithau | dhanishṭa nakshatre śukrama yoge bṛihaspati vāsare | siṁharāsi gate savitariḥ kumbha rāsi gate chandramasiḥ | ananta paṭṭa pvashtaka pratimā tṛiya vidhi kṛitam | ananta vrata udyāpana sampunedaṁ | yojyamāna śrī lohalanimha dvijavara śrī tejarāma soma[śarmma]na

[2] [sya] bhājya saha bhāṭṭi śrī jayatarāma somasarmmaṇasya bhājyā saha udyāpana saṁpunedaṁ anena udyāpanena [ja]na dhanavṛiddhi māra | ananta sukha prāpti tadutare vishṇu loka [nivā]sa kāmā ananta vrata pratishthā saṁpurṇṇamiti idaṁ paṭa lekshita jayateja punena daśabhiḥ dine likshitamiti || śubhahmastusarvvadā || śubha ||

Translation
[1] In the year 540 [A.D. 1420], on Thursday, the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra, during the *dhanishṭha nakshatra* and *sukarman yoga*, while the sun was in Leo and moon in Aquarius, [on this day] the Ananta painting, book, and image, the ritual [consecrations of all] three were performed. The Anantavrata was concluded. The donors were the twice-born Śrītejarāma Somaśarman of Śrīlohalanimha together with his wife and younger brother Śrījayatarāma Somaśarman together with his wife.

[2] The conclusion [of the ritual] was performed. From [the merit of] this bringing to conclusion, may [the donors'] family and wealth increase; from the desire to obtain endless happiness, and in the next world residence in Vishṇu's paradise, the Anantavrata was [performed and] consecrated. This painting was painted by Jayateja Puna in ten days. May it be good for all time!

Commentary
The Sanskrit is remarkably faulty, especially considering that two brahmins were involved in the dedication of the painting. The donors belonged to a place named Lohalanimha, which cannot be identified today.

The reading and translation are by Ian Alsop and his colleagues.

P15 *Vanaratna's Wife Distributing Alms*

M.77.19.3

Inscription
[1] [śreyo] 'stu | samvat 575 thva [samva] chalasa śrī govicha[ndra mahāvihā xxxxx śrī va]naratnapā[syaṁ] ke dāna yāñā tapasī jaṅgama brāhmaṇa [x]ta [xx] thva [xx] dvāko ke [xx] juchi 1 dhāre pradeśī jogi kuśaliyā jogi[ju]

[2] [gini xxxxxxx ke xx] chi 1 dhāre [xxx ha (?) phā xxxxxxx dhvako, x] ku [x ju] chi 1 dhāre juroṁ udayana astamatvaṁ dhāre [xxx bu] dāna yāñā juroṁ || śreyo'stu | samvat [x]88 [xx] na śukla a

[3] [xxxx] thau kapila dine vi [śakhā] na[kshatre bra x yo]ge [budha vāsare xxx] kohnuṁ śrī vanaratnapā[syaṁ] dāna yāñā ya [pa (?) xx]ntri pātāpurāṇa ke [phaṁ] dakshiṇā dāma chi 1 [dhā]re juroṁ | sarvasaṁga saka[la x] dvalachivo nya

[4] sara [xxxx] vo 1 [x] 90 dvātāṁ juroṁ | [śreyo'stu samvat xxx ma]rgaśi[ra] kṛi[shṇa] saptamyāṁtithau pūrvaphālguṇa nakshatre āyushmāṇa yoge somavāsare [x]nu rāśi gate savitari siṁ[ha]rāśigate cha[ndra]

[5] masi [xx]tesa [śrī vanaratna xxxxx juva dina juroṁ] | [xxxx ga]te graho[nā]ga śare mā [x] site [ma xx], sapta [x] bhagabhe [x śā]kara dine yoge sadāyu [x] ti [nai] sābde' [x] lajāva[cha(?)ko(?)xx] kṛito gatvā

[6] su [xxxxxx śrī xxx]. . . .

Summary
[1] In the year 575 [A.D. 1455], Vanaratnapā, while residing in Govichandra monastery, made donations of grains to ascetics, Śaiva ascetics, brahmins, and householders. Gifts were made to all who came from sunrise to sunset.

[2] Again in the year 588 [A.D. 1468], on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Śrāvaṇa [July–August], on a Wednesday,

[3] Vanaratnapā made donations to the entire monastic order

[4] consisting of 1,590 persons. In the following year [1469], on the seventh day of the dark fortnight of the month of Mārgaśirsha [November–December], a Monday,

[5] Vanaratnapā attained Buddhahood.

Commentary
The dedicatory inscription is written in a cartouche at the upper left-hand corner of the painting and is unfortunately badly effaced. A copy of the painting, however, is preserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Varanasi and includes the complete inscription. The Bharat Kala Bhavan inscription has an addendum stating that a new painting was commissioned because the original had deteriorated.

Very likely the painting was dedicated by Vanaratna's family upon his death. The generosity of Vanaratna is also known from *The Blue Annals*, a Tibetan historical work. It is unclear, however, why the inscription records two specific acts of donation. Certainly the later event, held in 1468, must really have been a great affair since it involved gifts to 1,590 people. It is not altogether clear whether the "entire monastic order" implies the lay and monastic congregation attached to the Govichandra monastery or a community of believers associated with a particular order but belonging to different monasteries.

With regard to the specific groups of ascetics who received gifts, the most interesting are the *jaṅgamas* and *kuśali* yogis. The word *jaṅgama* today denotes a caste name among the families who control the Śaiva monasteries (*maṭhas*) in Bhaktapur. In eleventh-century India, the word designated the newly ordained priesthood of the Liṅgāyata sect of Śivaism (Slusser 1982, 1: 235, n. 83). During the fifteenth century, the *kuśali* were members of the Kāpālika, a special sect of wandering Śaiva ascetics noted for their bizarre religious rituals. No longer ascetic wanderers, today they are family heads, "a Newar unclean caste known as Kusale, Kusle, or Jogi" (Slusser 1982, 1: 366). In the painting, the three seminaked figures in the group on the left probably represent the *jaṅgamas* and *kuśali* yogis, although they are difficult to identify. Vanaratna's generosity was not confined only to Buddhists but extended to people of all castes and religious persuasions.

The reading and translation are by Ian Alsop and his colleagues.

P17 *Vasudhārā Maṇḍala*

M.77.19.7

Inscription
śreyāstu || saṃvat 615 phālguṇa śukla [dvitiyāntighaudat(?)tra] bhādra pra[x]vati nakshatre guruyoge bṛihaspativāsare etadine i [x] bhagavatī śrīmahāvasudhārā pratishṭhākṛitaṁ dānapati śrīkāshṭhamaṇḍapasthālake salanchchhe gṛihādhivāsita tāmrakāra jakhāsiṁhana bhāryyou āsalakshmī vidyālakshmī tasyātmaja nu[x]pala putrī nukunimayi ete sammatena pratisṭhā sampurṇamiti || rājādhirāja śrīmachchhrī jayaratnamalladevasya śrīśrī jayaindramalladevasou vijayarājye [xx]tpuṇyena jajamānasya anuttarāsamyaksambuddha phala' prāptayate śubha ||

Summary
In the year 615 [A.D. 1495], on the second day of the bright fortnight of the month of Phālguṇa [February–March], this painting was dedicated by the metal merchant Jakhāsiṁha of Kathmandu together with his wives Asalakshmī and Vidyālakshmī and their son and daughter. The rulers were Jayaratnamalla and Jayaindramalla.

Commentary
In addition to the two-line dedicatory inscription, a short, very indistinct Newari inscription is written along the narrow red border at the bottom. It seems to contain the names of the *vajrāchāryas* who consecrated this painting. Below each narrative scene are numerous labels written in Newari, which identify the subject depicted.

The dedicatory inscription is problematic. The date given in the inscription corresponds to 1495, when Ratnamalla was the ruler of Kathmandu. According to the inscription, however, Ratnamalla and Indramalla were joint rulers. Ratnamalla, one of Yakshamalla's sons, seized the Kathmandu kingdom in 1484 and is believed to have ruled it briefly with his brother Arimalla (Slusser 1982, 1: 61–62). Ratnamalla became the sole ruler in 1509 (Regmi 1966, 2: 34), and he ruled alone until his death in 1520. The king of the Kathmandu kingdom whose name includes a form of the word *indra* is Mahendramalla, who ruled alone from 1560 until 1574.

It would thus seem that the scribe made a mistake in identifying the joint ruler as Indra rather than Ari, unless Arimalla was also known as Indramalla. Since the date given in the inscription corresponds to 1495, it must be assumed that Arimalla ruled jointly with Ratnamalla until at least that year. This is not improbable since the first document that mentions Ratnamalla as the sole ruler is dated 1509.

P18 *Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara Maṇḍala*

M.72.108.2

Inscription
śubha | śreyāstu | saṃvat 662 māgha-māse | śuklaḥ paksheḥ ashṭamyāntithauḥ kṛittikā nakshatre [xxx] yoge [xxx] vāsareḥ thvadi [xxx] ashṭamivrattadinaya vrattārambha thvanasamvi navamī rohiṇī nakshatre entajoge budha[?]vāsare vratta sampurṇṇa dina juro | [x] hita śrī [chai (?) xxxx] vihāre vajrāchārya bhikshu śrī bhārasanajasava[x]vajrāchārya śrī bhikshu sru [xxx] jasa jajamāna [xxxx sa (?)] yakalagako. . . .

Summary
In the year 662 [A.D. 1542], on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Māgha (January–February), the Ashṭamivrata was begun by the *vajrāchārya* Bhārasanajasa and another *vajrāchārya* and completed on the ninth day.

Commentary
The inscription is much longer than the transcribed summary, but its poor condition makes reading

of it difficult. The inscription seems to contain the names of the donor and his family members for whom Bhārasanajasa and another *vajrāchārya* performed the Buddhist rite known as Ashṭamīvrata dedicated to Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara. This rite is a modified Vajrayāna version of one of the oldest Buddhist religious ceremonies, the Upashadha. The Ashṭamīvrata is observed on the eighth day of the bright fortnight of every month. It involves *the worship of the Lord of the World (Amoghapāla) in the* sangha-maṇḍala *with the muttering of the six-syllable* mantra *accompanied by ritual touching of the parts of the body, and meditation. An honorarium is given to one's spiritual teacher, and a meal to monks. At the time of the third watch the performer of the rite takes his own meal, of the five immortal substances, or of milk alone. The flowers and all the other accessories of the rite are white. At night the performer remains awake, and listens to the tales in praise of this observance, for the sake of salvation (Brough 1948, p. 672).*

P25 *Three Mother Goddesses*

M.81.271.1

Inscription

śubha || gaṅgārāma bhāro maṇisiṁha bhāro viśvasiṁha bhāro bhāyarāma bhāro vāsiṁha bhāro rāmachandra bhāro jayadeva bhāro padamaṇī bharī jamunā bharī gaṅgā bharī rohiṇī bharī jamunā bharī annapurṇābharī jamunā bharī gomati bharī matiti bharī gaṅgā bharī vasundharā bharī thvatasamuchchayana śrī 3 mahārakshī vratapratishṭā sampūyāhāva thvapati bhāra dayakā julo || sam 799 bhādrapada kṛishṇa saptamyāyāntithou pra astamyā tithau || thvakunhu pratishṭhāyāhajuro | śubhamastu ||

Summary

On the seventh and eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Bhādra (August–September), in the year 799 [A.D. 1679], Gaṅgārāma Bhāro along with members of his family performed the Mahālakshmī rite and consecrated the painting.

Commentary

The inscription is written in Newari and apart from the information given above contains a string of names of Gaṅgārāma's family members. Appended to the names of female members of the family is the epithet *bharī*, the feminine form of the title *bhāro*. In the lower register of the painting are labels briefly identifying the donors and two priests. The principal priest is Rachchemana Bhāja, while the attendant seated behind him is Deva Bhāja.

P26 *Vishṇu Maṇḍala*

M.73.2.2

Inscription

[1] svasti || śrīśrīśrī anantanārāyaṇāyanamaḥ || urvvīvyomabhujaṅga sammitaśāke śuklānavasyatithau kāmārer-chavasu bheharau grahapataukūm-bhechatāraptau | jīvakāri-mudāmudeyadupateryyoge' tigandādkatha mallāgreṇa-mahibhṛitā gaṇavatānantavra-todyāpanaṁ || śrīśrīśrī sveshṭadevatāprītikāmanān śrīśrīśrī anantavratādāhāva pratibhāradayakā śrīśrīśrīkuleshṭa devatārādhanaparāyagāṁbhīryya

[2] jñānārṇṇava gandharv-vavidyānipuṇa sūryyaraṁśāva-taṁsa śrīśrīśrī ugramalla-devasanadunta | śrīśrī sumatijayajitāmitramalladeva dājaḍo saḍonāpaṁdhunakā bhagirāmapradhānāṅga yāverasa hotāśrīśrī upādhyāya chandraśekharaḥ | anantasaṁsāra vimochanāya sarvvātmane sarvvaguṇapradāya | namost-vanantamaheśvarāya trailo-kyanāthāya valapradāya || samvat 801 bhādrapade śuklachaturddaśi gurudina sampurṇṇa śubham |

Summary

[1] The inscription begins with a salutation to Anantanārāyaṇa. The painting was dedicated on the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra (August–September), in the year 801 [A.D. 1681]

[2] on the occasion of the performance of the Anantavrata by Ugramalla and Jitāmitramalla [sumatijayajitāmitramalladeva] to please their personal deities. The chief minister Bhagirāma Pradhanāṅga and the royal priest Chandraśekhara Upādhyāya also participated in the performance of the rite. In a short verse Vishṇu is eulogized as the god who ends the cycle of rebirth and grants all qualities to all creatures. He is also the giver of strength and is addressed as infinite great lord and lord of the three worlds.

Commentary

The inscription was composed in Sanskrit and Newari. The date is given twice, once in a chronogram and again in numerals. Although Ugramalla's name is mentioned first and he must have initiated the performance of the rite, Jitāmitramalla is given precedence in the row of portraits below. He was the principal ruler of the Bhaktapur kingdom between 1673 and 1696, although his brother Ugramalla was a coruler for some time. Bhagirāma Pradhanāṅga was the most influential member of the court at this time, and he, the royal priest, and crown prince Bhūpatīn-dramalla are included and identified in the portrait gallery below the inscription. Interestingly, in the eulogy Vishṇu is also addressed as Anantamaheśvara, Maheśvara being a common epithet for Śiva rather than for Vishṇu.

Glossary

Unless otherwise indicated, all defined terms are Sanskrit.

Term	Definition
abhayamudrā	"gesture of reassurance"
Abhisheka	initiation ceremony
Achala	angry manifestation of the bodhisattva Vajrāpaṇi
Ādi Buddha	primordial Buddha
Aghora	synonym for Bhairava
Agni	regent of the Southeast and god of fire
Akshobhya	"imperturbable"; one of five transcendental Buddhas
Ambikā	form of Durgā, wife of Śiva; worshiped by Hindus as the merciful and forgiving universal mother
Amitābha	"boundless light"; one of five transcendental Buddhas
Amitāyus	Buddha of endless life; a form of Amitābha
Amoghapāśa	"unfailing noose"; a form of Lokeśvara
Amoghasiddhi	"unfailing perfection"; one of five transcendental Buddhas
Ananta	"endless"; primordial serpent who forms Vishṇu's couch when he is in his periodic cosmic sleep
Anantavrata	ceremony performed in honor of Vishṇu for longevity and prosperity of the devotee
añjalimudrā	"gesture of devotion"
Ardhanārīśvara	"lord who is half woman"; androgynous form of Śiva and Umā
ardhaparyaṅka	posture in which one leg extends to the ground and the other is folded toward the extended leg
Āryamañjuś-rīnāmasaṅgīti	litany of epithets extolling Mañjuśrī
Ashṭamātṛikā	"eight mothers"; worshiped by Hindus and Buddhists in Nepal
Ashṭamīvrata	rite during which images of Amoghapāśa are consecrated
Avalokiteśvara	"lord who gazes [in all directions]"; bodhisattva of compassion
avatāra	"descent"; incarnation of the Hindu god Vishṇu, who saves the world from evil; English, avatar
Bali	demon king
Bhagavān	principal and eternal god
Bhāgavata-purāṇa	important Vaishṇava text narrating life of Kṛishṇa
Bhagavatī	feminine form of Bhagavān; the Great Goddess Śakti; common epithet for all goddesses in Nepal
Bhairava	"terrible"; frightful aspect of Śiva
Bhaishajyaguru	Buddha of healing
Bharata Nāṭyam	classical form of Indian dance
bhikshu	monk
Bhīmaratha	rite related to old age and senility performed in Nepal by Buddhist Newars
bodhi	"enlightenment"; from which comes the word Buddha, meaning "enlightened"

bodhichitta	"mind of enlightenment"; final state of grace in Vajrayāna Buddhism
bodhisattva	"one whose essence is perfect knowledge"; a Buddhist savior who is potentially a Buddha but who compassionately refrains from entrance into nirvana to remain in this world to help others
Brahmā	four-headed Hindu god of creation also venerated by Buddhists
Brāhmī	script widely used in northern India during the Lichchhavi dynasty, from which the four most common scripts used in Nepal were derived
Bṛihaspati	planet Jupiter
Buddha	"enlightened"; a title applied to Śākyamuni, founder of Buddhism, when he attained enlightenment; also his spiritual predecessors and cosmic prototypes
Budha	planet Mercury
chaitya	sanctuary, *stūpa*, temple
chakra	"wheel"
Chakrasamvara	popular Buddhist god in Nepal
Chāmuṇḍā/ Chāmuṇḍī	goddess of dread; one of the Mother Goddesses; Kālī
Chandra	moon-god
Chintāmaṇi Lokeśvara	"lord of the universe with a wishing gem"; form of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara who grants all wishes of a devotee
chitrakāra	"artist"
chöten	Tibetan word for *stūpa*
ḍākinī	Buddhist demigoddess, especially associated with the *mahāsiddha*
Ḍākinī	Buddhist goddess of the East
Dakshiṇakālī	"southern Kālī"; synonym for Chāmuṇḍā used in Nepal
Daśamahāvidyā	ten goddesses of transcendental knowledge
daturā	flower sacred to Śiva; jimsonweed; English, datura
deva	"god"; suffix added to names of Lichchhavi rulers
Devī	"goddess"; one of the three supreme Hindu deities, embodying universal energy; assumes many forms
Devīmāhātmya	"glorification of the Great Goddess"; sacred book of Hindus, especially of Śāktas
dhāraṇī	"that which supports"; collection of mantras and charms said to have been taught by the Buddha
dharmachakra-pravarta-namudrā	gesture signifying first sermon taught by the Buddha
dhoti	unstitched cloth worn by men
Dhṛitarāshṭra	Buddhist regent of the East
dhyāna	"meditation" or "visualization"; invocation of a deity including his or her personal description used by priests to invoke a deity and by artists to represent a deity; English, dhyana
Dikpālas	world guardians of the eight directions
Dipaṇkara	past Buddha
Durgā	Hindu goddess in a destructive form
Ekajaṭā	manifestation of the Buddhist goddess Tārā
gaṇa	impish, gnomelike attendant of Śiva
Gaṇḍavyūha	text expounding Mahāyāna philosophy; describes a young man's search for enlightenment
Gaṇeśa	elephant-headed auspicious Hindu god who removes obstacles from the path of his devotees; also worshiped by Buddhists
Gaṅgā	Hindu river goddess
Garuḍa	mythical bird; mount of the Hindu god Vishṇu
Garuḍāsa-namūrti	representation of Vishṇu riding his mount, Garuḍa
Gaurī	synonym of Umā or Pārvatī; also the name of a Buddhist goddess
Ghaṇṭākarṇa	"bell-eared one"; another name for Kumāra in Nepal
graha	"seizer"; planet; also evil spirit
Hanumān	monkey god
Hari	synonym for Vishṇu

Harihara	representation of a composite form of Vishṇu and Śiva
Hayagrīva	"horse-headed one"; Vajrayāna god; avatar of Vishṇu
Heruka	the fierce aspect of a Buddha; each of the five transcendental Buddhas has his Heruka aspect, and each Heruka also has several aspects
Indra	the most powerful member of the Vedic pantheon; king of the gods; regent of the East
Indrāṇī	one of the Mother Goddesses
Īśāṇa	form of Śiva; regent of the Northeast
Ishṭadevatā	god who protects and guides an individual, family, or monastery
Īśvara	another name for Śiva
Jambhala	Buddhist god of riches and consort of Vasudhārā
Kagyüpa	Tibetan word for a type of religious order
Kākāsyā	Buddhist raven-headed guardian deity of the East
Kālachakra	"wheel of time"; Vajrayāna text and god
kalāpustaka	picture book
Kālī	Hindu goddess in a bloodthirsty, all-destroying form
kamaṇḍalu	spouted waterpot usually carried by ascetics
Kāpālika	member of a heterodox Śaiva sect
Kārttikeya	commander of the army of gods in their battle against demons; another name for the Hindu god Kumāra
karuṇā	"compassion"; embodied in male Buddhist deities
Kaumārī	one of the Mother Goddesses
Khaṇḍarohā	Buddhist goddess of the West
kīrtimukha	"face of glory"; stylized lion's head; auspicious symbol
Kṛishṇa	deified hero identified with Vishṇu
Kubera	regent of the North; god of wealth
kumāra	"young boy"; "prince"
Kumāra	six-faced god of war; another name for Kārttikeya
Kumārī	living goddess; a virgin Newari girl worshiped as the living embodiment of the Great Goddess
Lakshmī	wife of Vishṇu; goddess of beauty, wealth, happiness
lalitāsana	"posture of grace"; sitting with one leg placed parallel to the ground and the other pendant
lama	Tibetan word for "superior one"; title given to the heads of monasteries and other high monastic dignitaries in Tibet
Lāmā	Buddhist goddess of the North
liṅga	"sign," "gender"; symbol representing the Hindu god Śiva; pillar symbolizing his aspect as the axis of the universe and phallus; English, linga
Lokeśvara	"Lord of the World"; epithet for Śiva and Avalokiteśvara
Mahādeva	"great god"; synonym for Śiva
Mahākāla	"great time"; synonym for Śiva; also a Buddhist protective deity
Mahālakshmī	one of the Mother Goddesses
Mahāpari-nirvāṇa	"great passing away" of Śākyamuni
mahārājalīlā	"posture of royal ease"
Mahāsāhasra-pramardinī	"great destroyer of one thousand foes"; Buddhist goddess
mahāsiddha	"perfected being"; eighty-four teachers and mystics who lived in India from the seventh to eleventh century and were venerated by both Buddhists and Śaivas
Mahāśrī Tārā	"savioress of great beauty"; one of several manifestations of the Buddhist goddess Tārā
Mahāvidyās	"goddesses of great [or transcendental] knowledge"
Mahāyāna	"great path"; a form of Buddhism
Maheśvara	"great god"; an epithet for Śiva
Maheśvarī	one of the Mother Goddesses
Mahishāsura	buffalo demon whom the Great Goddess destroys

Maithili — language spoken in Mithila; popular in the courts and among Nepali literati in the fourteenth century

Maitreya — "friendly one"; the future Buddha, whose appearance is awaited

makara — mythical aquatic creature; an auspicious symbol; decorative element found on water spouts

malla — "warrior"; suffix added to Newari royal names after 1200

Manavināyaka — form of Gaṇeśa in which the god is shown dancing

maṇḍala — geometric diagram of deities, figures, and symbols, often used as a mechanical aid to meditation; English, mandala

Maṅgal — planet Mars

Mañjuśrī — bodhisattva of wisdom; in his fiercest manifestation he is Yamāntaka, destroyer of Yama, god of death

mantra — mystical formula of invocation or incantation essential in *tāntric* religious practice

Māra — Buddhist god of desire, whose daughters attempt to distract Śākyamuni just before his enlightenment

maṭha — Śaiva monastery

Mātṛikā — one of the Hindu Mother Goddesses

Māyā — mother of Buddha Śākyamuni

Muchalinda — serpent-king, who spread out his hoods to protect Śākyamuni during his period of withdrawal

mudrā — hand gestures used by priests, deities, worshipers, dancers, and actors to symbolize various religious rituals, abstract concepts, and mundane actions

nāga — serpents or mythical creatures that play an important role in Buddhist legends, art, and architecture

Nairātmā — "no soul"; a fierce goddess who represents the Void; belongs to the family of Buddha Akshobhya

nakshatras — group of twenty-eight stars

Nalagiri — mad elephant who was tamed by Śākyamuni

Narasimha — man-lion; avatar of the Hindu god Vishṇu

Nārayaṇa — synonym for Vishṇu, the preeminent yogi

Nāṭyeśvara — "lord of dance"; dancing Śiva

Navadurgā — "nine *durgās*"; forms of the Great Goddess worshiped in Nepal by both Buddhists and Hindus

Navagraha — "nine planets"; worshiped collectively as gods by both Hindus and Buddhists

nāyikā — heroines of Sanskrit poetical literature

Niṛiṭi — god of dread; regent of the Southwest

nirvāṇa — "extinction"; the ultimate aim of a Buddhist; achieved when all desires and individual consciousness are extinguished, thus ending the cycle of rebirth and suffering; the goal of every Buddhist; English, nirvana

Nṛityeśvara — Śiva as lord of the dance

pāda — "foot"; when added to a proper name or title denotes respect

padma — "lotus"

Padmanarteśvara — "lotus lord of the dance"; form of bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara

Pañcharakshā — "five protections"; five Buddhist goddesses of good health and success

Pārvatī — wife of Śiva in her benevolent form; another name for Umā

Paśupatināth — form of Śiva as lord of the animals

paubhā — Newari word for painting on cloth

piśācha — ghoulish figures

prajñā — "wisdom"; embodied by Buddhist female deities; the consort of a Buddha with whom he is united; English, prajna

Prajñāpāramitā — "perfection of wisdom"; one of the most important Buddhist goddesses, the embodiment of the *Prajñāpāramitā* scripture

Pratyālīḍha — militant posture assumed by angry deities

puna — Newari word for "painter"

rāga — basic musical mode or melody; English, raga

rāgamālā	string of melodies
rāgaputra	"son of *rāga*"; variation upon a musical theme
rāgiṇī	musical variations based on a *rāga*
Rāhu	demon who causes eclipses; one of the planetary deities
Rāmāyaṇa	popular Hindu epic recounting the exploits of the Aryan hero Rāma
Ratnasambhava	"jewel-born"; one of five transcendental Buddhas
Rāvaṇa	demon king of Lankā; villain in the *Rāmāyaṇa*
Rupiṇī	Buddhist goddesses of the South
sādhanā	meditation formula recited in order to evoke a deity; synonym for *dhyāna*
Sadyojāta	synonym for Mahādeva or Śiva
Śaiva	believer in Śiva as the supreme deity
Śakra	synonym for Indra
Śākta	believer in the Great Goddess as the supreme deity
śakti	"energy"; generic term for a goddess; consort of a Hindu god; English, sakti
Śākyamuni	epithet of the Buddha; sage of the Śākya tribe who lived c. 563–483 B.C.
sambhogakāya	"body of pleasure"; body of Buddha as perceived in the celestial realms by bodhisattvas; symbolized by elaborate crown and jewelry in images
Sāṁkhya	"reckoning," "number"; system of Hindu philosophy stressing the reality and duality of spirit and matter
Saṁvara	form of Hevajra who belongs to the family of Buddha Akshobhya; his *prajña* is Vajravārāhī
śaṅkha	"conch"; common attribute symbolizing abundance and fertility
Sarasvatī	"sacred speech"; daughter and consort of Brahmā; popular Hindu goddess of learning, wisdom, and music; worshiped by both Hindus and Buddhists
Śītavatī	Buddhist goddess who protects her devotees from dangerous animals and insects; one of the Pañcharakshā goddesses
Śiva	one of three supreme Hindu gods, noted for his paradoxical nature as both ascetic and family man, destroyer and creator
Skanda	another name for Kumāra or Kārttikeya, son of Śiva and Umā
Śrīdhara	"bearer of prosperity"; emanation of Vishṇu popular in Nepal
stūpa	hemispherical or cylindrical mound or tumulous serving as a Buddhist shrine or symbol; symbol of the *parinirvāṇa* (total decease) of Buddha Śākyamuni; English, stupa
Śūkarāsyā	Buddhist sow-headed guardian deity of the South
Śukra	planet Venus
śunyatā	"nothingness," "the Void"
Sūrya	sun-god
Śvānāsyā	Buddhist vulture-headed guardian deity of the West
tāntric	referring to a class of texts called *Tantra*, a body of revelation in which are laid down the rites by which the realization of the Ultimate can be attained in this life; English, tantric
Tārā	"the savioress"; most popular Buddhist goddess in Nepal
tarpaṇamudrā	"gesture of oblation"
tathāgata	"he who comes and goes in the same way"; synonym for a Buddha
thanka	Tibetan word for a type of sacred painting depicting deities and religious figures, usually done on cloth; same as *paubhā*
thyāsaphu	Newari word for "historical chronicle"; type of folding book invented in Nepal
toraṇa	gate of honor; elaborate arch of a Buddhist *stūpa* or Hindu temple
Ullukāsyā	Buddhist owl-headed guardian of the North
Umā	synonym for Pārvatī, wife of Śiva
Umā-Maheśvara	seated image of the Hindu god Śiva and his consort Umā

upavīta — sacred thread worn by the higher castes, especially the brahmins

Uray — Newari word for a caste group that are makers of religious objects and are domiciled in Tibet

urṇā — tuft of hair between the eyebrows considered a sign of greatness

ushṇīsha — cranial bump on the head of a Buddha signifying wisdom; turban; crest

Ushṇīshavijayā — Vajrayāna goddess of long life

vaidya — "physician"; caste; family name

Vairochana — "belonging to the sun"; one of five transcendental Buddhas

Vaishṇava — believer in Vishṇu as the supreme deity

Vaishṇavī — one of the Mother Goddesses

Vaiśravaṇa — Buddhist regent of the North; god of wealth venerated by Hindus and Buddhists; identified with Kubera

vajra — "thunderbolt," "diamond"; attribute of Hindu and Buddhist deities

vajrāchārya — Vajrayāna priest

Vajradhara — Buddhist deity regarded as the supreme Buddha in some Vajrayāna texts

Vajrapāṇi — "thunderbolt bearer"; one of the oldest and most significant bodhisattvas

Vajravārāhī — "adamantine sow"; belongs to the Buddha Vairochana's family; the indestructible female element of intuition

Vajrayāna — "diamond path [or] vehicle"; form of Buddhism influenced by *tāntric* ideas; firmly entrenched in Nepal during the Transitional period (879/80–1200)

Vajrayoginī — popular goddess among Newari Buddhists

vanamālā — flower garland worn by Vishṇu

varadamudrā — "gesture of charity"

Varāha — avatar of Vishṇu

Vārāhī — one of the Mother Goddesses; feminine form of Varāha

Varuṇa — Hindu god; regent of the West and the waters venerated by both Hindus and Buddhists

Vasudhārā — "stream of gems"; Buddhist goddess of wealth and the earth; consort of Jambhala

vasus — group of eight who represent the treasures of the ocean

Vāsyā-Vajravārāhī — special form of Vajravārāhī invoked in rites involving the bewitching of men and women

Vāyu — regent of the Northwest; god of wind

vidyā — "knowledge"; incantation; charm

vihāra — Buddhist monastery

vinayahasta — "gesture of submission"

Vināyaka — name by which Gaṇeśa is known in the Kathmandu Valley

Viruḍhaka — Buddhist regent of the South

Virupāksha — Buddhist regent of the West

Vishṇu — "the pervader"; one of the three supreme Hindu gods who is regarded as the preserver of the universe

viśvavajra — double-diamond; Buddhist emblem

vyākhyāya-ṇamudrā — "gesture of teaching"

yajamāna — patron of a religious rite

yaksha — ancient Indian nature deity often portrayed as a gnomelike attendant; local tutelary deities

Yama — regent of the South; god of death

Yamāntaka — "destroyer of Yamā"; angry form of Mañjuśrī; important Buddhist god

yantra — geometric drawings used in Hindu and Buddhist rituals

yoga — "union"; spiritual system common to both Buddhists and Hindus emphasizing rigorous physical and mental discipline to attain knowledge of the self and union with the universal consciousness

yogi — practitioner of yoga

yoginī — feminine form of yogi; emanation of the Great Goddess

yoni — female genitalia; spouted support of a *liṅga*

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Art of Nepal

A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection
Pratapaditya Pal

$22.50

In the valley of Kathmandu, to quote Perceval Landon, "the continuity of life and faith has suffered from no religious intolerance for, strange though it may seem, Buddhism and Hinduism have here met and kissed each other." The millennia-long commingling of these two religions in Nepal finds its most exquisite expression in that country's art. The unknown artists of Nepal have had an influence on the art of a large area of Asia far beyond what the tiny size of their country, hidden in the high Himalayas, would suggest.

In his catalogue raisonné of perhaps the finest Nepalese collection outside Nepal, Pratapaditya Pal documents this remarkable tradition. He begins with a substantial introduction that traces the country's historical and cultural development. The catalogue itself is divided into three sections—sculptures, drawings from artists' model-books and priests' manuals, and paintings—each with a generous art historical introduction of its own.

The works from the museum's sculpture collection, executed in stone, bronze, terra-cotta, and ivory, cover almost the entire historical period from A.D. 300 to the nineteenth century. The painting collection is probably the most comprehensive of its kind in the world and includes outstanding examples of illustrated manuscripts, religious paintings on cloth, and didactic and narrative paintings on paper, dating from the eleventh through the nineteenth centuries.

The most instructive single holding is a group of sketchbooks and drawings that were either kept in artists' families to be used as model-books or served as priests' manuals. This is the most important assemblage of such material in any collection in the world. Dating from the fifteenth century, it is published here for the first time and will be invaluable to students of both art and religion.

Altogether, the catalogue contains detailed descriptions and illustrations of 71 sculptures, 39 paintings, and 31 books of sketches and drawings. All objects are generously illustrated, some in more than one view and with details, and 36 in color. In addition, there is an appendix devoted to most of the major inscriptions on the objects, a glossary of Sanskrit and Newari terms, and a comprehensive bibliography and index.

Art of Nepal is the second volume in a projected series of catalogues raisonnés documenting the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's holdings in the arts of India, Tibet, Nepal, and Southeast Asia. The series began with the publication of *Art of Tibet* in 1983.

Pratapaditya Pal is senior curator of Indian and Southeast Asian art and curator-in-charge of West Asian art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Considered by many to be the world's leading scholar of Nepalese art, Dr. Pal is also an adjunct professor of fine arts at the University of Southern California.

University of California Press
Berkeley 94720

ISBN 0-520-05407-5